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LEISURE HOUR SERIES

A

STORY OF THREE SISTERS

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BY

CECIL MAXWELL

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I.

"Like the sweet apple which reddens upon
the topmost bough,
Atop on the topmost twig,—which the pluckers
forgot somehow,—
Forgot it not, nay, but got it not, for none could
get it till now."

II.

"Like the wild hyacinth flower which on
the hills is found,
Which the passing feet of the shepherds for
ever tear and wound,
Until the purple blossom is trodden into
the ground."

A STORY OF THREE SISTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together:
Youth is full of pleasure;
Age is full of care:
Youth like summer morn;
Age like winter weather:
Youth like summer brave;
Age like winter bare."

AT Merehampstead the sun rises over a wide expanse of dewy grass fields. Field linked to field, they reach out to the golden marshes, and these stretch away eastward to the sea. A bird flies rapidly inlandwards, trying to measure the bright distance with quick, weary pulsations. How low and little the earth looks compared with that sea of sunlit air and high-arched sky! A fragment of mist still hangs here and there, pierced by the sharp spear of a poplar, or caught on some shock-headed willow. Those willows, melted into faint blue dots in the distance, trace the winding lines of the dykes which creep across the marshes, and of the little grass-fringed blue river, in which some of them end their quiet wanderings. Over the gold and green land comes the dewy morning wind in great waves and gushes of freshness. The cows stand contentedly cropping buttercup-grass and munching, and the weary bird flies on.

One after another in the little town of Merehampstead folks open their eyes, and the threads of histories which have lain at rest since last night are taken up afresh: some which have gone so smoothly ever since the reel was set moving, run on briskly to the first tangle; some fretted skeins mingle into still deeper confusion; and for some the knot of life is untied by the breaking of the thread.

About a mile from Merehampstead there is a certain house, half manor, half farm, called Rose Hall. It is a stiff, straight-looking place, as square as a box, with tall shiny windows, and so little visible roof that the walls have a look of having outgrown themselves in comparison. Five tall poplars stand in front of it like sentinels, and nod menacingly over the garden wall. It is a massive red-brick wall, with a stone coping, and has two tremendous iron gates, which rather inconsistently stand always open. The farm carts, indeed, enter by these once magnificent portals, and go bearing off to the left to the barns and granaries, and to the farm-yard.

The De Wints—who now live three miles off, at Stourton, in a sickly-looking stone mansion, in the Italian style—once resided at Rose Hall; but after the marriage of John De Wint with Miss Harriet Cleve, who was an heiress, and related by her mother's side to the noble family of Lord Lynton, of Stourton, the De Wint ideas expanded beyond the narrow limits of the old manor, and so Rose Hall came to be bought by one Richard Burnet, a woolen-draper from London.

That the house had gone down in the social scale was not to be denied, but its decline had been of the gentlest.

There is a portrait of Richard Burnet still hanging in what was once his library, which looks rather that of the country gentleman, both squire and farmer, than *of the merchant.* He is there represented as a fine, *broad-chested man,* of about fifty, gray-eyed and clear-

faced, with his powdered hair brushed away from his forehead and tied in a neat queue. If under his reign the farm buildings crept somewhat nearer to the dwelling-house, and the great iron gates, instead of rolling back to admit that quaint rattling vehicle which Mrs. De Wint called her chariot, stood meekly open all day, letting the farm carts with their load of whitened hay pass slowly through, at least no unkind hand dealt roughly with the dignity of the old house itself. Everything belonging to the Burnets had a solid well-being about it—even a handsomeness of a certain kind. The furniture they brought to Rose Hall was as massive, and looked as incapable of ever wearing out, as any of the belongings of the De Wints themselves. There was still the gleam of silver on the sideboard, and the twinkle of rare and delicate china in the cupboards. The difference was that the Burnets handled their good things with a conscious pleasure of possession and a certain respect for their rarity and costliness; not lavishly and familiarly, like people whose traditions have grown up among luxuries.

Late in life Richard Burnet married a lady of a good but decayed family, who brought not only good yeoman blood, but also excellent brains into the Burnet stock. She was a shrewd, managing woman, devoted rather to her children than to her husband, for, though she bore the character of being an exemplary wife as well as an exemplary mother, she never lost a certain coldness towards her husband. Perhaps for this very reason the perfect courtesy and mutual good understanding between them was absolutely unbroken. She never interfered in her husband's affairs; she never talked business, nor committed herself by expressing an opinion on politics: even in the house she occasionally yielded the reins of government in matters that did not concern her own particular kingdom, the nursery and the school-room.

Her influence over her children never waned during

all the years of her long life, not even when her sons were men and gone out into the world, and her daughters were married and had children of their own. It is curious how people always judge a wife more by her attitude to her children than to her husband: the very men themselves do it. When Mr. Richard Burnet found the fate of his children taken entirely out of his hands, and some pet scheme of his put down without even an argument, he remembered she never rebelled except where they were concerned, and felt none the less convinced that he had the best wife in the world. He wished to make his eldest son a merchant; but Mrs. Burnet placidly declined a most favorable opening which offered to him, and Richard the younger was sent to college. The favorable opening fell to the lot of the second son, John, who made an excellent man of business, whereas Richard would certainly have made an outrageously bad one. Richard resembled his mother, and was the very joy of her heart. He returned to Rose Hall, after his Cambridge career, no indifferent scholar, and, at least, an intelligent and refined gentleman. Old Richard acknowledged the success of his wife's arrangements with a feeling of some discomfort. He felt more at his ease with John, or even with his youngest son Henry—the noisy, rattling young soldier —than with this tall, dignified, scholarly young gentleman, who gave him the impression of being something between a lord and a schoolmaster. Among the women, however, Richard was an oracle: he was his mother's favorite child, and his sisters bowed down to him.

In spite of all this adulation, Richard was not very happy at home; indeed, home had no really strong tie for him, except the affection between his mother and himself. His three sisters were good, homely girls, who dusted his books and papers with their own hands lest they should get disarranged, and kept the oak press in his room well supplied with neatly-folded linen, between the folds of which they strewed sprigs of sweet lavender;

besides which, they looked after baking, brewing, churning, preserving, pickling, and many other domestic concerns; but as companions they were decidedly dull. They stood too much in awe of their grave-faced, elder brother, even to make the most of such humble attractions as they possessed.

The idea of Richard being amused by the chat of Anne, Amelia, or Caroline would have seemed almost profane to these modest maidens. Even Caroline, who was the boldest and most spirited of the three, would generally manage to catch the eye of one of her sisters, as they were all sitting in the common sitting-room, when she was in want of a little sisterly conversation; and with a side glance at studious Richard at his writing-table, the three would slip away to the cool, leaf-shaded, fragrant dairy, or sometimes to the kitchen, where they would chatter and chirp like birds, bending their fresh faces over cream-pans, or plunging white arms into soft seas of flour, or tying branches of sweet-scented herbs to hang from the kitchen rafters. The kitchen at Rose Hall was a low-roofed, roomy place, stone paved, and with stone mullions to the windows, where the wasps came flying in and out in the hot summer-time, attracted by the smell of good things within.

The servant maids, with their long, straight pinafores tied with many strings behind, and their short-sleeved gowns, flitted about in joint business with the young ladies of the house. They worked together with an old-fashioned, hearty familiarity which breeds something very different from contempt, and with that delightful absence of self-assertion which in modern times so eats away the dignity of life. So the quiet, sunny lives of the three sisters glided on from hay-making time to Christmas and round again, till Amelia's marriage came to remind them and their mother that they were grown-up women, each with an unfinished history of her own, and that they might in all possibility come to figure on

the stage of the world with new names and meanings of their own, not merely as Mrs. Burnet's daughters and as Richard Burnet's sisters.

The Burnets had never been a very lively family at the best of times; but the dullness reached a climax at last, when all the three girls were settled in homes of their own, and Richard was left alone in the old house with his father and mother. He had been called to the bar some years before, but had never practiced, though almost as much of his time had been passed in London as at Merehampstead. He had traveled abroad, too, and only returned to Rose Hall every six months or so on his mother's account. The chief problem that had occupied Mrs. Burnet's mind during those years had been where to find a worthy wife for her paragon. She had certainly no immediate desire that he should marry; but, whenever he should choose to take to himself a wife, she wished to be beforehand with him, and, at all events, secure her vote on that important question. His judgment of women was the only point on which the worthy woman doubted her son's wisdom; or rather, she argued that it is always the wisest of men who are deceived in that difficult matter, whereas a special Providence guides by an instinct the weakest of mankind to the most capable wives. But she found it less easy to make up for the short-comings of Providence than she expected. After she had hesitated between clever maidens whom she dreaded, and foolish ones whom she despised, till her son had reached the mature age of eight-and-thirty, he took the matter out of her hands in a summary manner by choosing as his bride a lady whose existence she had never so much as heard of till the day when she was told to welcome her as a daughter-in-law.

Only a few weeks after the news of Richard's engagement reached Rose Hall his father died. It is impossible to believe that Mrs. Burnet mourned much for her husband: in her secret heart she had long half

feared that the best years of her son's life would be past before he came to his inheritance. She longed to welcome him as master of Rose Hall; but to welcome this unknown wife of his as mistress in her own place was a different matter. The three daughters, with their husbands, and John from Manchester, came to be with Richard and his mother during the last days of the old man's illness. The young women shed copious tears, as they sat in the darkened room, watching the kindly, bluff face sharpen into the keen angles of death. The large, sinewy hands, which could not lift a cup now, lay helplessly on the coverlet, and looked pitiful enough to these tender-hearted women. Their mother's equanimity puzzled them much, and they said now and then to one another, "It is wonderful how mother keeps up." She nursed him unweariedly day and night, slipping away for an hour's rest sometimes, but oftenest spending it with her eldest son.

One warm July afternoon she crept feebly into his little study, and sat down, almost trembling with weariness, in a large arm-chair. Richard was writing a letter, and did not at first greet her with his usual inquiries. Presently she spoke: "Father seems to me much weaker to-day, Richard."

He laid down his pen, and looked up at her. She was steadying herself with a hand upon each arm of the chair, and regarding the wide sheet of closely-written letter before him almost fiercely.

"Go on with your writing," she said; "you don't need to stop for me."

"My letter can wait," said Richard. "It is not post day till Friday. Shall I go up to him, mother? Do you think there is danger, at least, immediate?"

"I think Rose Hall will soon get a new master—and mistress," she added, after a pause.

A gleam came over Richard's still face, and he passed his hand caressingly over a letter which lay by his side.

"*It is well for* them," she said, "who find a place

ready for them in the church-yard when others step into their places here. It is hard for old folks finding new homes. I don't doubt but your father will be the best off of us, and I don't feel I have any need to fret for him, poor man. We know he is going to a better country; and, as for me, I suppose Caroline or Anne will give me house-room for as long as I may need it. Amelia's I couldn't think of; it is a weary journey to the North for an old woman like me."

Richard had come away from the objectionable letter and was standing rather uneasily on the hearth-rug.

"I see no occasion, mother, for you to leave here at all, unless you wish it," he said. "You will not feel happy anywhere but here for long, I think. Besides," he added, with that rare unbending of the brows, which made him look as if he were smiling though his lips were still, "I don't think I could manage to spare you to Caroline or Amelia just yet. Why, the house would be like a clock without a pendulum without you."

Mrs. Burnet shook her head, but looked half mollified all the same.

"You had better learn what your wife wishes," she said, "before you say any more."

"Mary wishes whatever I wish," he answered, shortly; and the question was dropped for the time.

Mrs. Burnet really carried her threat into execution so far as to leave Rose Hall after her husband's death and her son's marriage. She remained three months with her youngest daughter, and then returned to her old home, ostensibly on a visit; but the visit lasted the rest of her life. She came back brimful of half-unconscious antagonism to her daughter-in-law; but Mrs. Richard Burnet entirely declined the battle. She was a gentle, shy girl, reverencing her husband above all human beings, and for his sake bearing the grievous yoke of her mother-in-law's presence with great sweetness during the whole of her short married life. Poor, *beautiful, sad Mary!* it was not till her wistful face was

hidden away between coffin-boards for ever, that Richard Burnet realized that she had not had an entirely happy life. For the first few months after her death a kind of coldness sprang up, for the first time in their lives, between Richard and his mother; but the chains of many years were not so easily broken. Little by little, she won back her old influence over her son himself. As for his children, he had never had sufficient energy to interfere between them and their grandmother.

Of the two eldest children, Anne and Pamela, he took little or no notice. He could never forgive them for being both girls. Even their mother's caresses were usually bestowed on them safely hidden in their nursery, or away among the fields and lanes, when she was allowed to wander out with her little flock—round blue-eyed baby Emilia in her arms, and the other two clinging to her skirts. It is a comfort to think that, at such times, she must at least have had some happy moments, when the blond heads of the children shut her in, and she almost forgot that her married life had turned out such a failure.

Little Emilia was just old enough to toddle unsteadily with the aid of a finger grasped tight in her small hand, when her mother began to droop. The six months during which she lay slowly fading were, perhaps, the happiest she ever knew. It was a little, chill gleam of sunlight coming at the sunset of her gray, dreary life. Her mother-in-law softened to her a little in those days, and her husband's affection revived under the shadow of coming separation. She would sit propped up in her large cushioned chair, watching the three little ones at their play on the smooth garden lawn. There was a door which opened from the square, walled garden into a little field they called the home meadow. Sometimes, in the hay season, she would be carried so far, and look on at their play among the hay;—grave Anne keeping house in a mansion with walls and roof of sweet grass, with a front door which she could creep

into on all-fours—Pamela with a wild crown of leaves on her head, and an ear of green corn for a sceptre, enthroned on a hay-cock, shouting, "I'm going to be queen. Come, Emilia, you may be the little princess." But Emilia, who was standing balanced baby fashion on her heels staring in admiration toppled over as she tried to wave her fat arms in applause, and rolled over and over in the grass, like a round, red-cheeked apple.

Sometimes they took the children away because she looked tired, and then she would lie placidly watching the sunlight filter through the red leaves of the copper beech outside her window, and the rooks circling round the poplars; listening all the time for the creaking of Emilia's little chaise, and the patter of the children's feet coming in from their walk.

Old Mrs. Burnet took care frequently to place the large, leather-covered family Bible within reach of her chair or couch. She did so, partly from a religious feeling that it was her duty to administer such medicine as she could to her daughter-in-law's soul, as well as to her body; and partly, also, as an easy and delicate way of giving her a hint that she would do well to transfer her attention to the affairs of another world, seeing that her course in this was so nearly run.

Mary seldom opened the Bible; indeed, it was much too heavy for her weak hands to lift; nor by any allusion did she appear to have understood the hint. When at last the doctor told them aside that "Mrs. Richard would not last many more weeks," Mrs. Burnet thought it her duty to speak plainly on the subject. So one Sunday morning, when Richard was gone to church, she broke the ice by telling the invalid she had sent a message to the vicar, asking him to pay a visit to Rose Hall. "I thought you would like to see him, Mary."

"Yes."

"I should have sent before, if I had known Dr. *Proctor thought your* illness so serious."

Mrs. Richard lay with her hands loosely clasped,

gazing into the sunshine with weak, half dazzled eyes. She made no answer.

"I am afraid the doctor thinks very badly of your case, Mary." Another uncomfortable pause, but Mary remained impenetrable. Then, with a bold plunge into the difficulty: "I don't want to pain or shock you unnecessarily, my dear, but it is my duty to prepare your mind for the worst. Dr. Proctor has great fears for you."

The old woman was much shaken. Her voice trembled, and her eyes, which had so seldom softened to her daughter-in-law, were full of tears.

"Don't cry for me," said Mary, taking her hand kindly; "I know my time must be very short now, and you see I am very happy: only be good to my little ones."

Somehow the old, thin hand slipped from her grasp. She seemed to have forgotten it and everything else for some minutes.

"I think they will be better without me, after all," she went on. "I have been so weak all my life—so weak." She turned her face away from the light with a sigh, and was silent. A strong spasm of conscience seized and shook the old woman. The passive figure and averted face became intolerable to her, and she slipped away to some household concerns. Household concerns were a never-failing tower of refuge to this excellent woman.

CHAPTER II.

"I felt a mother want about the world,
And still went seeking. . . . ."

IT was a very sombre, if not really dull life in the midst of which the three children grew up. Regularly every morning were they tied into the narrowest and straightest of pinafores, and these garments might have been taken as emblematic of the course of life their grandmother would fain have chalked out for them. The three little, close-cropped heads were made to bend wearily over interminable hems and over yards of cross-stitch. They were set to learn the catechism on Sundays and Milton on week-days, the great rolling lines coming in broken ripples from the little foolish parrot lips. Sedulously were they led to the shores of the great ocean of learning to fill their tiny buckets with so much of the living water as might be necessary for the every-day needs of intelligent and domestic young women. It was weary work—such small buckets and so much water to carry. It might have been better to stand on the shore and wonder, and let the great waves lap their feet; but has not education from time immemorial consisted mainly of this bucket-carrying, and pouring in of information into a certain empty tank called the mind? Mrs. Burnet was no revolutionist: she went in the old tracks.

After all, they had not to bear such a grievous burden *as falls to the lot of* fashionable young ladies now. For *country-bred children* at the time of which I am writ-

ing—that is, some seventy years ago—there was at least some relief from the weariness of lessons. At Rose Hall there were fruit-gathering days, when the children darted about, picking up the hard apples as they came bounding down, and Jock, up in the thick branches, shook the tree like a hundred tempests, and all the orchard grass was mottled with golden fruit and leaves. There was the morning visit to the poultry-yard, and the cackling welcome from chickens and geese—all those eager bills gaping round, and the little birds to be rescued from the big ones, who were shamefully inclined to bully and put upon their weaker relations. There were the early lessons in skimming, when, with such breathless delight, they saw the cool blue milk showing through the great rent in its yellow cover of cream. Then the delicious making-up of butter when churning was over; the smacking and splashing of the fresh, cool substance, and the turning out of firm little pats, one after another, clearly impressed—the cow, the cock, the wheat-sheaf, and, last of all, the new mould from London, with a profile of King George the Third, with "God Save the King," in printed letters all round, for a motto.

Not that their learning was entirely limited to these domestic matters. The three girls learned French from their father, and even a little Latin; and with him they read many books which are not now considered conducive to education, though Mr. Burnet thought them so. Even when they were grown-up young women they kept up the habit of reading with their father; indeed, they grew then to enjoy what had been rather a terror to them in their younger days. It was very strong meat on which these literary babes were fed from the first: it was no wonder if they found "Bacon's Essays" rather dry and bitter food for such delicate young palates: poetry, even, afforded them little relaxation. All the Shakespearian circle was dear to Richard Burnet, and he tried to make it so to his young daughters. They

read Pope, too, and Dryden; and, hardest of all, they dragged their doubtful accent through Racine's weary sea of words. The novels of their time were held well out of their reach, as indeed was best. Perhaps what they enjoyed most was an occasional reading from the *Spectator* or *Tatler*. They firmly believed all the letters to be genuine productions of the fine folks in town, and wondered much what strange place London might be, where gallant gentlemen were tried in the Court of Honor, and ladies were drilled in the use of the fan.

Anne was the best reader. She had a calm, even face and voice; her reading flowed on unchecked by any emotion, or expectation, or weariness. Pamela, on the contrary, had too much of the dramatic instinct in her to make a pleasant reader. She invariably fell into a kind of listlessness, which was a reaction following upon the violent repression with which she thrust her temptation to act into the background. It seemed to her a cruel irony of fate to have to sit there on her straight-backed, stiff-legged chair, with all the neatness of her dull, respectable life closing her in, and read the burning words of brave Imogen, and about the swift, daring acts of Juliet. What would come of it if *she* ran away from home, dressed in men's clothes; or if she talked to a lover from her bedroom window and then married him secretly? Would people think it one whit the less shocking because she loved him as well as Juliet loved Romeo, or Imogen Posthumus? And it was not only what people would say, but she felt the thing in itself would be wrong. It would be wrong and impossible for her to do any of the great, noble things which won her admiration. The age of great deeds was not in her time: for her, only that gray-colored virtue called patience remained. But she often remembered a lesson they taught her when she was a very little child, when in the first days after her mother died she used to ask if "the people in heaven never came back any more just *to see," and the* answer always was, " Angels used to *come down on earth* once long ago, but not now."

Pamela was no favorite with her grandmother. She had a look of her mother which galled Mrs. Burnet, and kindled the old jealousy after poor Mary was dead. But apart from this, she was not a good child: it is so hard for a child who is nobody's favorite to be good. Not that she cared much for her grandmother's want of affection, for there was an entire enmity between the two; and, hard as it is for a child to nourish a consistent dislike to any one whose presence it is accustomed to, Pamela was not behindhand with her share of the bitterness. She was devoted to her father and to her sister Anne, and her father was always cold to her. He looked at her through the dark medium of bad character which her grandmother held up to his eyes; she was to him a plain, uninteresting girl, who disobeyed her grandmother, was forgetful and untidy, and worst of all, teased his pretty, little, good-tempered Emilia.

Anne was a steady, grave girl, with a wonderful turn for domesticity, and a plodding industry which carried her respectably through those loftier parts of her education which were under her father's control. She was a simple, sweet-natured girl, with a great faculty for admiration, which saved her from the commonplace. Above all, she was true to the core, and had an infallible discrimination for seizing and drawing to herself all that approached her of true and good from without. Pamela, whom they all distrusted, who was stupid to her father, vicious to her grandmother, and hard and cruel to little downy Emilia, was to Anne her wonderful sister, whose naughtinesses were undeniable yet unaccountable, and whom she loved and would have shielded from every gust of ill-fortune, not because she was herself the stronger, but because Pamela was the more precious.

As for Emilia, she was a thing not to write about, but to see. It was a miracle how such a sunshiny creature had grown up in *that* dull house. Her beauty was the *beauty of perfect health* and unruffled well-being. Her

eyes were bright with absence of any passing cloud of thought: she had no such exciting hopes and fears and disappointments as other folks; indeed, she had no imagination to suggest any. Lessons formed the only approach to a shadow that had ever saddened her, and that was made as light as could be by the indulgence of her father. He made tacit allowance for her slender capabilities, and expected much less of her than of her sisters. To do Emilia justice, she did her best; but then her best was so very poor: nor can any one be very severe in judging of her father's laxness. She came so meekly, morning after morning, and perched, book in hand, on the narrow window-seat in his study, with her back to the garden and the sunshine and the flowers, her brown head down-bent, making soft creases in her neck, while the wind stirred the shadow of her hair on her forehead. As he watched her he knew she was learning her chapter of English history by rote, just as a clever parrot might; and that if he cross-questioned her upon it presently, she would merely look up in his face in dumb bewilderment, with her dewy eyes, and with some nonsensical answer trembling upon the sweetest of red lips. Yet it was out of the question to call her stupid, or to crush such a soft, yielding thing with angry words or punishments.

There is a soft place in the hearts of men to which they admit some one creature unquestioned and untested, while all others must needs go through long examination and proving before they may enter so much as the outer court. Into this innermost Richard Burnet had once invited his wife, but his faith failed him; he had shut the door upon her, and poor Mary had lived half in and half out of her paradise, had even seen the aperture growing daily smaller and smaller, and had died at last altogether shut out in the numbing cold. Emilia, on the contrary, was taken in wholly and immediately; *only to her it was* not paradise, but only the every-day *place where she had* always been very comfortably at *home.*

The one problem which distressed Pamela was this contradictory affection of her father for the weakest of his children. She looked upon her father as the wisest and most upright of human creatures: his pale, grave face was to her the face of an oracle; yet she saw this paragon under the tyranny of her grandmother on the one hand, and the plaything of silly little Emilia on the other. With the foolish logical inexperience of youth she fancied the heaviest ought to turn the scale, that the wisest ought to rule, the noblest be crowned. She was jealous, not for herself, but for Anne. Whatever doubts she might have about herself, she knew that Anne was large-hearted and sincere, a rational, womanly girl. She knew, also, that her grandmother surveyed her with a certain approbation quite free from enthusiasm; that in Emilia's eyes she was plain, useful, unornamental Anne; and that to their father she was mainly distinguishable as being quiet and tractable, in contradistinction to Pamela herself.

Those have at least gained something from life who have passed a happy childhood. Pamela's life turned out a very gray one after one or two transient gleams of color, but she never looked back to her girlhood with that melting of soul which some unhappy, middle-aged people feel; and there were some episodes in it which could never fail to revive in her a shame and despair, as keen as at the time of their occurrence.

There was the terrible day when, driven into a corner by her grandmother's wrath, fear left her no refuge but in a lie. It was an awful position for three small children. Arranged before their grandmother's writing-table, where stood many tomes of account-books, concealing untold horrors of addition and subtraction within their covers, were they summoned to confess who had cracked the top pane in father's study-window. Emilia was gaping and frightened, Anne somewhat awed, but self-possessed.

"No, grandmother, I didn't break it." She spoke with an accent and look impossible to doubt.

"Then it must have been one of you two," said grandmother, piercing with her bright eyes the younger children. "Don't cry, Emilia; that's like a baby. You had better confess, one of you. You will be much more severely punished if you tell me an untruth, and I shall find you out, mind."

Pamela's face was flashing from dark to bright with fear and excitement. No wonder she was fixed upon for the first examinee; no wonder in her desperation she said "No," and the moment after, in an agony of remorse, yet not daring to take back her word, she hid her scarlet face in her hands with a burst of tears. Mrs. Burnet put the same formal inquiry to the other children again, keeping one severe eye fixed on Pamela all the time. This refinement of cruelty was, however, thrown away, for the heart-misery of a truthful child who has told a lie is too deep to be made deeper. All the solitary confinement, long tasks, and sending to Coventry that followed, could scarcely reach her through the bitterness of her self-reproach.

In trembling defiance of orders, Anne stole once to the door of the room where she was incarcerated, to give her a drop of comfort.

"Don't cry, Pamela dear," she whispered; "father's not angry. He says grandmother ought not to have asked you if you did it. He says when any one is taken up they don't let the judge ask the prisoner if he did it or not, because it isn't fair."

"Run away, or you will be caught," said Pamela in a voice full of sobs; "but kiss me through the key-hole, dear, before you go."

Emilia was trembling at the stairs' foot lest daring Anne should be caught. She was in terror for Pamela, too, for she had heard her name coupled with the word "*prisoner,*" and believed her sister had done something *for which she might* be immediately consigned to jail.

Besides, the dreadful story of Ananias and Sapphira was present in her mind. Fancy if Pamela were to fall down dead all alone up there in the blue-room, and be found lying in the middle of the floor when they opened the door, to let her out!

CHAPTER III.

". . . . . Born in a cage,
Accounting that to leap from perch to perch
Was act and joy enough for any bird.
Dear heavens! how silly are the things that live
In thickets, and eat berries!"

WHEN Pamela was about thirteen years old an event took place which caused no little stir in the sleepy household of Rose Hall. Mrs. Burnet's youngest daughter came to pay her mother a visit for the first time since her marriage, with the exception of that memorable occasion when all the family assembled at the time of old Richard Burnet's death.

Mrs. Long was something of an invalid, and had been so for a number of years. From that cause, and from the fact of her having lost some five or six children one after another, she was considered by her husband and family as a model of suffering patience, and was pitied and petted accordingly.

She was a pretty, bright woman, to whom no one could grudge the petting; but the pity was probably rather overstrained. On the whole, she had led a happier life than many who shook sympathetic heads over her troubles. The loss of her children had happened in each case very early, and she was not one who would learn quickest to take pleasure in their existence. As for her ill-health, hers was one of those vapid constitutions to which being ill is the normal state of things, but which are incapable of the keenest suffering or the *deepest depression*.

With all her undoubted amiability and sweetness, Mrs. Long had no characteristics which, if her six babies had grown up into commonplace boys and girls, and she had been spared strength to bustle about the world like other women, would have made her at once an authority and an object of devotion in her small world; and it is not to be doubted that these things were extremely pleasant to her. Mrs. Long was a religious woman, and her ill-health even threw a faint halo of saintliness round her. People imagined they were drawn to her chiefly by these qualities, but here both she and her friends were deceived. Her shrewdness, and a kindly sort of worldliness she had, were much truer attractions than her piety, which, in reality, was not remarkable, and was somewhat flimsy in texture.

To Anne and Pamela, however, Aunt Carry was a perfect revelation of loveliness and goodness. Even their father was neglected for this new object of devotion; and Mrs. Burnet, who had never made the least effort to make herself beautiful or an object of desire in the children's eyes, became most unreasonably jealous. Coming into her daughter's room one morning, before breakfast, she found Carry seated in a low chair, making very wry faces, while the two elder girls were engaged twisting and pinning her hair round the comb. Emilia, seated on the floor, was engaged in tying a shoestring.

"Good morning, mother," said Carry. "I have got three tiring-women, you see, and I think I should die of a fourth. They treat my poor head like a pincushion. Thank you, Anne, no more scrubbing just at present, dear child!" and she put up her pretty, delicate hands in entreaty.

"I don't suppose it will last long, if that is any comfort to you," said Mrs. Burnet, acidly. "Children are always ready to make a grand to-do with anybody strange: *the last they* ever think about are those who *have done for them* from before they can remember. It

would be long enough before they would either of them think of coming and offering to do any little thing for me, though I have done for them what not many would do for children not their own. If any one else strange was to turn up you would soon find your day was over."

She spoke very bitterly, but so much less coldly than usual that Pamela was touched, and reflected sorrowfully during the day that it was very shocking that she should not love her grandmother more. Towards dusk that evening she stole into the dining-room, where Mrs. Burnet was settling down for a twilight doze, and ventured on the subject again in hesitating tones.

"Grandmother, would you like me to come and do your hair to-morrow morning—or at least do anything else for you? I will if you like."

"What do you mean?" said grandmother, in unfeigned astonishment, which chilled poor Pamela to the bones. "Do my hair! Do you think I am in my dotage?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Pamela; "you don't understand. I'm sorry I said it;" and she made a hasty and confused retreat, fearing to have a humiliating explanation dragged from her.

Mrs. Burnet, still sitting up in her chair and asking herself what the child had got into her head, suddenly recollected the affair in the morning, and for a moment thought of Pamela with more tenderness than she had ever felt for the child before. She leaned over her bed for a moment that night, and would have given her a kiss instead of offering a cold cheek-bone as usual, if she had looked up. But Pamela, who had been crying by herself for an hour or two in the empty school-room, was much too proud to expose her red eyes to remark, and buried her head obstinately under the bedclothes.

"There is no accounting for her," said Mrs. Burnet to herself as she went off. "You may as well try to reckon on the wind as on that child's temper."

But there is one more misadventure of Pamela's childhood which at the time it happened wounded her even

more deeply than all, though she learned to laugh at it in a sad sort of way afterwards. The three children slept in one large room, but opening from it was a little dressing-room, all window on one side, and lined on the other three with presses and cupboards, where their clothes and sundry old things which had belonged to their mother were kept. This little room was a favorite haunt of Pamela's, and many were the scoldings she had incurred for being found there with icy-blue fingers on winter days at lesson or dinner time. Here with some odd chips from an old box of chalks did she execute sundry curious pictures of her own imagining. Here, also, for the space of one week she kept a diary, written in a hand and spelled with a spelling that might have baffled an expert. In the pages of an old-fashioned book of recipes, written years ago by the hand of her mother before her bright young days were over, did Pamela pour her childish troubles and complainings. Poor Mary! if the blooming young girl, so soon to be a bride, could have seen the end of all, as she wrote out her quaint recipes and simple country remedies—"How to make sage tea"—"An excellent plaster for a sore throat"—if she could have read the sorrowful record of her child's life interleaving it! But no one ever saw Pamela's record, for she destroyed it herself at the end of the first week, lest the things therein should ever come to light.

But one other pastime she had, as carefully hidden as that of the diary, yet too fascinating to be given up. Most of the presses containing her mother's clothes were locked, but remaining open was one drawer, probably left so because it contained nothing but an old, torn muslin gown, a faded, reddish-colored scarf, and a few other articles of little value. On the rare occasions when her grandmother was out, and Anne and Emilia safely disposed of, it was Pamela's delight to array herself *in these faded* garments. The white muslin dress *was long enough* to become a train on her little figure;

the scarf was knotted around her waist, thrown across her shoulders, or converted into a turban, as might be; and looking at herself so disguised in the little specky looking-glass imported from the next room, she saw not the face of poor little Pamela Burnet, but that of Juliet as she looked from her balcony welcoming Romeo, or Rosalind jesting with a heavy heart, or the fearful brows of Lady Macbeth bent on that spot on her hand. "Much Ado about Nothing," too, was a favorite play. She would follow Beatrice from her playful, coquettish days into her passion and anger and sorrow, flinging away the gay-colored scarf at last, and letting her long hair sweep down over the old white dress. Rouge and pearl-powder she needed none; she could make her face flush and pale at will; and the white cheeks which she covered with her hands when Claudio began his frightful accusations against Hero would be scarlet with pity and indignation at the end of the story.

During the time Mrs. Long stayed at Rose Hall Pamela was too much enchanted with her aunt to have much recourse to the little room and its secret treasures. But just before the visit came to an end there happened to take place a performance by some strolling actors at the Town Hall at Merehampstead, to which Mrs. Long, after much persuasion, was allowed to take her nieces. They all enjoyed the treat. Kind Aunt Carry was amused watching Anne's astonishment and Emilia's rather noisy raptures, which before long, however, subsided into sleepiness; but she was almost scared at Pamela's deep and silent absorption in the play. "I wouldn't take Pamela to such a thing again," she said to Mrs. Burnet next day. "Perhaps you're right, mother; a play-house isn't quite a good place to take a child to, and I fancy Pamela might soon get too fond of such follies."

"Such follies as Hamlet!" said Mr. Burnet, looking over the top of his book. He had been pleased with *his little girl's* enthusiasm. Hamlet was the play they *had seen the night* before.

"All play-acting is folly, to my mind," volunteered Mrs. Burnet, "whoever may have written the play. It is shamming what isn't true, and for no good, that I can see. There are troubles enough in this world without making believe to go mad and murder folks. I was always against the children going, and I'm glad Caroline has come round to my way of thinking."

"Besides," chimed in Carry, who liked to be thought original, "Shakespeare did write very great folly sometimes. I don't see much sense in those old-fashioned plays myself. I don't care for so much cleverness. What I like is something natural; but I suppose it is all right for scholars like you, Richard."

"Humph!" replied Richard, with the wise, benevolent smile he kept expressly for his womankind, and by means of which he had evaded how many a stormy argument.

All that day Pamela was living in a sort of glow reflected from the glory of last night. Hamlet in his long cloak was coming and going before her eyes; and the ghastly green light, which heralded the approach of the ghost, flashed across the July sunshine. Yet the play had not been all pleasure even to her. Ophelia had jarred terribly upon her ideas of art. "She made so many mistakes, and left out so much," reflected Pamela, ignorant of the powers of theatrical scissors. "And then she was so fat, and a great deal too old; and what was worse, she sang those little torn fragments of song off quite glibly to a tune, instead of crooning them over to herself. I could do it better than that if I were grown up," she thought, as she hid herself in her sanctuary, wild with elation and triumph.

Everybody was out; indeed, Pamela was supposed to be in the garden with her sisters; but she had slipped away for her own purposes, leaving Anne at work on one of those endless frills, with her neat array of scissors and cotton lying before her on the summer-house table. Emilia was sitting on a low basket at the door, gazing into the sunny garden, and at the ripening fruit, and

tasting the flavor of the last rose lozenge of a packet which had afforded the children refreshment between the scenes last night. She was a fat little thing still, and very pretty, with her soft dimpled neck showing above the low-cut, short-waisted body of her print frock.

"Anne, would you like to go to the play again to-night?" said she, hugging her knees, and sucking at the lozenge.

"No, not two nights running, certainly," said the sage maiden of fifteen from within.

"Wouldn't you like some more sweeties?"

"No, not particularly. What a greedy child you are!"

"I thought the sweeties were the best part," said Emilia, frankly. "The play was so long, wasn't it? And there weren't any horses. Don't you remember the lady we saw in the big tent at Stourton; she jumped through a gold ring on to the horse's back? I think a play is much better with horses in it."

"I suppose you didn't understand it, my dear; and you were asleep half the time. You will like that kind of thing better when you get bigger."

"Indeed I shan't. Aunt Carry is big enough, I should think, and I don't believe she liked it a bit. She said, this morning, it wasn't half so amusing as the marionnettes up in London. I *should* like to see the marionnettes."

"Nonsense! Father says he likes it best of all Shakespeare's plays," said Anne, decisively; "only they don't get good actors in a country place like this. And of course a child like you can't judge. Pamela liked it."

"Oh! Pamela is so queer; she has gone and shut herself up in the little cupboard-room, and there she is, singing away to herself very low, because she doesn't want any one to hear; and when I tried to go in she had bolted the door, and called out 'Go away' in such a passion. Grandmother would be fine and angry if she knew."

"Well, never you mind," said Anne, rather sharply;

"you're not anybody's grandmother yet, and it is not your business to interfere with your elder sisters."

Emilia took the rebuff with her customary amiability, but still presumed to be inquisitive on the subject of her elder sister's doings, and was not sorry when her grandmother and aunt returned, and, after the usual inquiry from the former for "that tiresome child, Pamela," set off to find the delinquent.

Pamela was at the climax of her glorious afternoon. She had forgotten even to be cautious and guard against her grandmother's return. At that moment she was standing, with the old gown trailing about her feet, in the centre of the floor. Flowers and green leaves were stuck here and there in the hanging, half-frayed plaits of her hair. She had a long chain of scarlet hips and haws wound round and round her throat; and with her wide gray eyes fixed upon the little looking-glass, she was singing in a sort of low chant to herself—

> "They bore him barefaced on the bier;
> Hey no nonny, nonny, hey nonny;
> And in his grave rained many a tear;"

dropping now and then a flower from the tangled bunch of weeds and blossoms in her hands. Her rough, brown hair fell low over her brows; her eyes seemed filled with the shadow of it. Her lips were parted, but motionless; as she sang all movement in her seemed to have passed into her long white arms and restless hands.

Suddenly, with a gasp, she let fall her flowers, and the room seemed to reel round and round with her. She had not time to throw off her drapery or clutch the flowers from her hair, for at the second shake the treacherous bolt fell, and they were all in the room.

If she could only have kept the door fastened till she could get off her finery, scoldings and punishments would have been mere trifles, well purchased by that

intoxicating afternoon; but to stand there in her absurd costume, exposed to the terrified astonishment of her grandmother's face, Anne's bewilderment and vexation, Aunt Carry's gentle laughter, and Emilia's empty giggle, was unbearable.

She stood looking at them like a caged tigress till some little change in their position gave her an opening, and then, clearing the door with a bound, she dashed past them and through the room beyond into the lobby. Whether she caught her foot in her long skirt, or whether desperation urged her to plunge down, she scarcely knew herself afterwards; but by the time the others had reached the spot she was lying at the bottom of the steps, a long streamer of torn muslin trailing down the stairs after her, and the red berries of her necklace rattling merrily down the next flight. Pamela wished when they picked her up that she had broken a leg, or at least cut her head open; but she had suffered nothing but a bruise or two. Mrs. Burnet was very indignant, as people are apt to be when they have been frightened for nothing. Even Aunt Carry looked grave, and pressed her hand to her side as if the shock had been more than she could bear.

Mr. Burnet was rather amused when he heard the story, and insisted that Pamela should not be punished. He even went so far as to ask her one day, "What she was costuming herself like Crazy Jane for?" but she flushed scarlet, and would give him no answer.

Emilia gave her a severe unintentional cut on the subject. "I do wish you might dress up like that again, Pamela; you can't think what a queer sight you looked. I was fit to die of laughter,—till you tumbled down-stairs, you know."

"And then you yelled like a mad thing," said Pamela; "but I'm sure I don't see why you shouldn't have gone on laughing. It was just as good fun as the rest, I think."

"*Oh! but you* didn't do it on purpose, did you?

Do you know, Pamela, I heard Aunt Carry saying to grandmother to-day that she thought you did it on purpose; but grandmother said you were a great deal too fond of your own bones."

"It's no business of anybody's whether I did it on purpose or not," said Pamela, holding up her head. "And if I were you, I should be ashamed to be so mean as to go and repeat Aunt Carry's words behind her back."

"Aunt Carry wouldn't mind," sang Emilia, cheerfully. She was accustomed to snubs from both her elder sisters, Pamela especially; but snubs unaccompained by active punishment, such as imposition lessons or short allowance of pudding, were of small consequence. They rolled off Emilia's mind like rain off a cabbage leaf.

CHAPTER IV.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?"

IN many things Pamela and her father were much alike, but there was also a great gap between their characters which made the unlikeness more remarkable than the likeness.

Pamela had a sort of sympathetic second life outside herself in which she could breathe freely and enjoy, whatever dullness or depression might be hovering over her own head; but Mr. Burnet's nature was one of those of which you might safely predict that life could not turn out a very satisfactory affair for such a soul.

That he was a man of considerable cultivation, doomed to live all his life among uncultivated people, was an unfortunate circumstance which had to bear much of the blame of his failures; yet it sometimes occurred to him that a stronger man would have moulded other circumstances for himself. His critical faculty outran his active powers: he was a severe judge of others, but chiefly so of himself. Yet notwithstanding this, he was proud of what was the greatest weakness of his nature —that tendency to see many sides to every question, so dangerous unless accompanied with the warmth and courage of a strong vitality. People are apt to remark of such a man, "Ah! if he had been less conscientious, *less particular, he* would have succeeded better;" but

it would be truer to say, "If he had been less cold, more unselfish, he would have succeeded better."

On one point Richard Burnet decided early in his youth, namely, that his life should be a very different one from that of his father, with its chronicle of fat cattle, market gossip, and rough country junketings. There was little in common between him and the farmer-neighbors who had been hand and glove with the old man; but neither did the squirearchy seem very ready to open its arms to the *ci-devant* woolen-draper. Mr. De Wint made use of the younger Burnet once at a time when he was canvassing for his son; but he gave him the cold shoulder afterwards when the election was over, and Richard turned his back on county society in disgust. After all, Mr. De Wint suited him little better than his father's old allies, and in his impatience he said the squire was no better than they. He talked fox-hunting and farming over his claret, and they over their beer; otherwise there was little to choose between them. In this Richard Burnet made a mistake, and showed his burgher origin; for blood is thicker than water, and the difference between the rough old squire and the rough farmers who rented his land was the difference of six centuries of noble breeding and noble association against breeding and association which that same muddy home-brewed ale might be taken as an emblem of, opposed to the squire's rosy claret.

Yet Richard Burnet had some gifts which raised him far above his critics on the one hand or the other—either the farmers who said of him, "Young Richard be a deal too foine for we muddle-headed country-folk to come anear of;" or the squire who now and then damned him with great heartiness, and called him a "confounded prig who had better go back to the tape-measuring business, for he hadn't sense to plant a potato." Richard had many scholarly qualities, and even a germ of something like genius, which he may be said, however, *to have killed with* too tender nursing.

The happiest years of his life were those he spent abroad. In those times he thought he had really got on to the right road at last. He intended to write, and was already furnished with a subject. He took an interest, appreciative but not enthusiastic, in art. Early Italian art, in those days so little cared for or understood, offered him just the scope he required for investigation and criticism. That no one cared much for the subject seemed no disadvantage to him, for he had so much of the true author in his nature that he wrote more for the sake of writing than of being read.

With short intervals of visits to England, he passed some years wandering about the north of Italy, and collected an immense mass of materials—good, bad, and indifferent. It was over the work of selection he first came to grief. Everything he had once collected seemed to him too precious to be thrown away. The most cumbersome details, once they were admitted into his note-book, became impossible to discard; and so the work grew, and became larger and more involved, while the spark of life at the heart of it waned dimmer and dimmer. Still, over the earlier part of his book some faint reflection of the glow and spirit of Italy fell. All men are influenced by the sky over their heads; and the sharp, strong blue which filled the arches of the loggia where he wrote his first sheets braced him up to something like strength for once. It was after his marriage and final return to Rose Hall that the curse of dullness fully descended upon him. He wrote on in that suffocating atmosphere, but it was without pleasure and without hope. He doubted first his worthiness to deal with his subject, and then the worthiness of his subject to be dealt with at all. The English school of painting which was arising at that time, pledged to the mannerisms of Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Lawrence, had no tests fine enough to apply to the work of Cimabue and Angelico. The paintings of the earliest Italians were entirely disregarded, and those of the later schools

industriously read backwards by condescending and enlightened critics. Richard Burnet was overwhelmed with the stress of conflicting theories: his too fine-spun ideas suddenly collapsed, and the work was given up, or at least laid aside indefinitely.

This was a short time after his marriage. At first Mary's presence had seemed to usher in a better order of things. Her beauty and her sweet, light-hearted ways had evoked something like a response from her cold, self-absorbed husband; but, alas! poor woman, she herself was early doomed to extinction. The shadow of her home fell over her also. All her little quaint, whimsical ways were set aside by her mother-in-law; her enthusiasms fell into silence; her flashes of fancy, cast forth like a child's painted ball, dropped to the ground for want of a kindly hand to catch and fling the bright thing up again; and the sweetness of her nature dwindled into a mere sickly patience.

Once more, after his wife's death, Richard tore himself away from his dreary, inactive life to find what comfort he might in authorship. He took up many subjects in a dilettante way, but made nothing of them. He began a translation of "Virgil," which he corrected and re-corrected till it became a perfect patchwork of after-thoughts. He began a book on archæology; then he returned to his first work, but never got beyond interlining, interleaving and eliminating.

But this revision of his old book led him on to something new. It may have been partly that he was beginning at that time to teach his two elder girls Italian; but probably it was more the effect of sundry scraps of Florentine history which floated up to the surface of his mind, as he plunged into his old manuscripts again, that the idea first occurred to him to write a translation of the "Divina Commedia." The history of this unfortunate work may as well be told at once. For eight years Richard Burnet worked at the "Inferno" alone.

It was written in blank verse with the most laborious and conscientious correctness, and illustrated by copious notes and commentaries. Every theory about Dante's intentions, literal, metaphorical, allegorical, was followed out and discussed with respect. In fact, the poem was treated as a huge conglomeration of riddles. The work was more a Dantesque encyclopedia than a translation, and as such its value was probably great, particularly at the time it was written. This was the first work which Richard had really tried to publish, and it was a great blow to him to find it refused by every publisher to whom he offered it.

However, nothing daunted, he still went on with the "Purgatorio." He had been engaged on this second division of his labor some five years, and was struggling with that feeling of distrust in his own powers which had already crushed so many attempts, when Cary's translation of the "Inferno" made its appearance. The work made no very general impression at the time, but on Richard's mind it left a deep mark. His own work was laid aside from that time. The papers remained untouched in a dusty, spider-haunted cupboard during the nine years that elapsed before Cary's noble work was completed. Soon after that time they were taken down and destroyed sheet by sheet by the wrinkled hands which had been round and firm when the first pages were penned. To secure himself against criticism, invidious comparison, perhaps ridicule, had been Richard's passion through life. He was no less sensitive as to exposure after his death. The old man had no means of destroying such a mass of papers at one time without notice, so he burned them by a few sheets at a time, day after day. Only Pamela and one other person knew of the existence of the manuscripts; and they were not aware of their destruction till after Mr. Burnet's death, when Pamela, looking over a diary of her father's (one of the few that had escaped destruction), called the attention of her companion to the following entry: "I

this day have destroyed the last sheet of my translation of the 'Divina Commedia' of Dante, together with all notes and commentaries intended to illustrate the work. I have been thirteen years occupied with so much of the poem as was accomplished: that is, eight years on the 'Inferno,' and five on the first twenty cantos of the 'Purgatorio;' and I have been exactly three weeks and four days destroying the same. I have done so because I do not desire to put my work in competition with another manifestly superior, since published."

During the years Mr. Burnet was working at these various ropes of sand Pamela was by no means idle. Her dramatic studies were continued still in secret, and they took a more definite form as years went on. In fact, Pamela had determined to become an actress. When she was about sixteen she and Anne paid a visit to Mrs. Long in London, and it seemed to Pamela that the whole of her previons life was washed into pale colors by that brilliant, glorious six months.

They could scarcely have gone to a house that presented a greater contrast to the sombreness of Rose Hall. Mrs. Long's ill-health disabled her from going out much, but she loved to surround herself at home with all kinds of elegancies, prettinesses, and gayeties. She had young girls always about her, partly because she liked it, but still more because it pleased her husband and made up for her own deficiencies. With wonderful tact she managed to keep her ill-health out of the way of interfering with his enjoyments. The true Englishman requires a good deal of amusing generally, and Mrs. Long made it her business to keep her husband continually amused, working to that end herself when she was able, but always keeping an ally to hand ready to fill a gap.

Little as Anne and Pamela imagined it, they were brought all the way from Merehampstead chiefly for that purpose, and unconsciously they fulfilled their mission to perfection. Pamela especially quite delighted

her uncle Robert. Anne he considered somewhat dull, indeed; but her prettiness gained her a fair place in his favor. He was the first person who had shown any marked consideration for Pamela, and his kindness let loose an ocean of pent-up affection in the girl's heart. Indeed, she sometimes reproached herself for almost forgetting her father, and reminded herself that he was, after all, her first and greatest idol.

Mr. Long soon found that nothing delighted his young niece so much as the theatre. Those were the glorious days of Mrs. Siddons, the Kembles, and Miss O'Neill. Of course Mrs. Siddons, as the representative of the highest and purest tragedy, was Pamela's favorite; and yet, except in moments when she was quite carried away with enthusiasm, she found (exacting young critic that she was) even in Mrs. Siddons something more to desire. Something of quickness and spirituality seemed to her wanting in the magnificent, heavy-limbed woman: even she was not swift, burning, living enough to satisfy Pamela with her half-fledged, exaggerated ideas.

It was fated that to Pamela no pleasure should ever come without alloy. Another knowledge made its way into her heart together with this new inspiration. The more definite her longing to act became, the more clearly she perceived the difficulties in her way. To be an actress at that time scarcely implied the reproach it does now; but still it was a profession which as a possibility for Pamela would have turned her whole family rigid with horror. She strove to put the question out of sight. At all events, she had no occasion to shock any one with her ideas for some time to come; so she kept her hopes to herself and nursed her ambitions in profound secrecy.

Some faint hint of what was in the girl's mind leaked out, however, as such things will; or perhaps a remembrance of Pamela's old escapade came into Mrs. Long's mind; but at all events, she took an opportunity one day of saying a word of indirect warning to her niece.

She painted the ills and temptations of an actress's life in very frightful colors, till at last Pamela cried, "How can you ever go to the play, Aunt Carry, and encourage it all? I wouldn't if I thought so about it."

"Why, why!" cried Mr. Long, when she appealed to him about the matter, "you and Aunt Carry haven't been quarreling over it, have you? Here are two cheeks redder than roses. Sweep the cobwebs out of your brain, my little girl. Your aunt is quite right. I would sooner see a young woman belonging to me put into her grave than taking to such a life. What do you say, Anne Wisdom?"

"I should think she had disgraced herself for ever," said Anne, energetically.

The sights and sounds of that London visit dwelt long after in Pamela's heart. Sitting under the wide sky of Merehampstead marshes, she would picture to herself the long perspective of the streets, half filled with mist on a winter's morning, with glints of softened light on the chimney-pots; or the strange, flying gleams and shadows at night, when the link-boys went flitting about, crossing and recrossing, as if in a weird dance. The crowds flowing past her in the street gave her a new feeling of absorbed quiet. She beat a kind of rhythmical cadence out of the shifting faces and sounding feet. She loved the parks, but Kensington Gardens best of all, with their pleasant primness, and the low, long palace with the sun glazing its windows at evening. Journeys to the city she remembered with infinite delight. She always looked out anxiously as they approached Temple Bar for the first sight of those two dingy brackets on either side, where the rain has run down in a black streak; for she had a secret idea that those ornaments had been placed there particularly for the accommodation of traitors' heads. The city has become a dreary, uninhabited place now, where all but the very *poor are ashamed to* be seen after nightfall; but in Pa-

mela's youth the days of suburban villas and diurnal railway journeys were not. These changes were looming on the horizon, however. Perhaps the affection of such a man as Charles Lamb for Old London was in a great measure called forth by the feeling of its swiftly-coming disgrace; indeed, as he wrote the tide had already set in the wrong direction.

CHAPTER V.

"Hope is our life, when first our life grows clear;
Hope and delight, scarce crossed by lines of fear."

EVERYTHING at home looked small, strange, and shabby to the girls when they once more found themselves in the old, dim, lavender-scented house. Their grandmother seemed wonderfully aged in those few months; and Emilia had grown dull and cross, as was, indeed, no wonder, poor child! Mr. Burnet surveyed his daughters with some astonishment. As they stepped out of the creaking Merehampstead post-chaise, and came into the lighted hall, he looked at them almost for the first time in his life, for he generally carried that shapely, intelligent head of his bent forward and downward, and his gaze passed over most near objects impassively. He was now surprised, and rather shocked, to find his girls become almost young women. He saw, too, that Emilia, who had been so much prettier as a child than her sisters, had now little claim to the palm of beauty. She, at the hobbledehoy age of fourteen or fifteen, contrasted but poorly with comely, buxom Anne, who would be nineteen next birthday. Anne had become a tall, wide-shouldered girl; her gray eyes had something of a mild, gracious aspect, but the lines of decision were not wanting in her square chin, with its firm dimple, and in her lips, which were long, and shut closely without compression.

Pamela *looked* mostly eyes and hair. She had

always a rather top-heavy appearance, arising from the width of her forehead, and the bushy nature of her hair, which was not wavy, but rough and light in texture. She had never been considered a pretty girl, chiefly because she was so different from the sleek, pink-faced type of beauty in vogue; but, fortunately, we are all wiser than our theories, and many people who would have hesitated to call her even good-looking took an unconscious pleasure in watching the outline of her head and neck, and the graceful movements of her arms. Her throat was very lovely—large, and somewhat curved outwards in front; and at the back her hair grew low down in soft little tufts.

She was full of excitement on this first evening of her return, and almost reconciled to be back in the dull old house again. She was not one to let her past slip away easily and be forgotten, and as they drew near the great iron gates, a thousand little memories, half sad, half lovely, with the haze of distance over them, came and touched her heart and gave her softer thoughts of a home that had been but a cold one to her.

The chaise was drawn up at the old stone steps, which, widening towards the bottom, finished off with a curve and a flourish on either hand. There were the long, narrow windows looking down at them, with light shining through the cracks in the shutters, and the rusty iron extinguisher over the door for putting out torches, just the same as ever, only somehow not the same—never quite the same again, Pamela thought.

Mr. Burnet came out to welcome them, and led them by either hand into the sitting-room with that stately courtesy which some old-fashioned gentlemen still show to their grown-up daughters. Mrs. Burnet gave them each a kiss consisting chiefly of curls and cap-ribbons, and then began bustling over their two little hair trunks, and insisting on dry stockings. The servant-maids, who had been reduced to a state of desperation by the dullness of the house, grinned a wel-

come from ear to ear; and Emilia, looking at her traveled sisters with envy and admiration, felt almost shy.

"I hope your aunt didn't forget to send me the bombazine," said Mrs. Burnet, when the bustle had a little subsided and the travelers were eating their supper; "and I hope she got it at Johnson's in Cheapside. I don't have a new gown so often, but I like a good one when I do get it, and I've bought my bombazines at Johnson's ever since I was first married."

"Oh! Uncle Robert says the shop has been shut up these ten years," answered Anne, "so Aunt Carry got it at the shop she buys her own gowns at. Indeed, grandmother, it looks lovely—black, with a little lavender sprig. And she has sent you a picture out of a fashion-book to show you how to get it made."

"Then your Aunt Carry is old enough to know better," burst out the old lady, indignantly; "but she never had any sense about matters of dress, and she never will, I suppose. Fashion-books, indeed! I beg you will put it in the fire."

"She gets the prettiest things of anybody I know," said Pamela, taking up the cudgels of defense. "Uncle Robert gave her a real black velvet gown the other day. She looks as grand as a queen in it."

"It is well for her to have the money to waste. If she had had as many to do for as I have all my life, she wouldn't look so elegant, I dare say. I hope you have not brought back any notions of velvet gowns and finery with you here, Pamela. You will not find outside show the first consideration in this house, I can assure you, whatever it may be in your Aunt Carry's."

"No," said Pamela, with a significant glance at the old leather chairs and the shabby table-cloth, "I didn't suppose I should."

"Pamela," said her father, some little time after, when the others chanced to be gone out of the room, "is your home such a very ugly place, then?"

"Dear father, of course not," said she, throwing both arms round his neck; "but why won't grandmother let me praise Aunt Carry a little without finding fault?"

"You must give way to your elders, my dear;" and he pushed her away a little coldly, for Richard always felt injured if any one tried to rouse him to resistance against his mother. He had never had the courage to contradict her, and had no desire to begin now.

The next day the boxes were unpacked, and Aunt Carry's various presents were produced. There was a Chinese tea-pot with four diminutive cups and saucers for Mrs. Burnet, a tortoise-shell comb for Anne, a smelling-bottle with a silver top for Pamela, and lastly, a little coral necklace for Emilia. She was almost frantic with delight, and cried so bitterly when her grandmother wanted to lock it up that Mr. Burnet absolutely remonstrated. "It looks very nice, mother; let her keep it for a few days." During that time Anne and Pamela continually surprised their sister standing tiptoe on the dining-room fender taking surreptitious peeps at the effect of the ornament in the looking-glass. At the end of the week Emilia appeared red-eyed and woebegone and without her necklace. "I really couldn't allow the child to go about the house dressed up in that style any longer," said Mrs. Burnet to her son. "She is as vain as a peacock already, I am sorry to say."

Pamela made fun of her own gift. "Ha, ha!" she laughed; "fancy me in church sniffing away at a scent-bottle like old Miss Isabella De Wint. But I wish I had her mittens and the long-handled green fan."

"I don't think it is much use, certainly," said Anne, turning over the article; "but the top is made of silver."

The next morning Pamela went out by herself for a walk, and tasted a new kind of happiness. The wide, level country had never seemed to her so fresh and bright and full of life; the patches of shade and sunshine went chasing across the marsh land, and the bud-

ding branches of the poplars made scarlet tracery against the sky, while at her feet the brown earth looked warm and soft as it crumbled about the roots of little, new-born, emerald plants. Coming home she caught the sunlight on the flushed white blossoms of a little almond-tree, and it brought to her mind a picture she had seen in London and had been unable to forget, though she had thought it but a queer thing at the time. It was the Virgin and Saint Anna sitting under a tree covered with white flowers and golden fruit, the Virgin with a serpent under her feet, while behind them a hedge of pale-colored roses was pressing through a lattice fence. "This is the spring and that is the summer," said Pamela half aloud, as she went by in a sort of happy dream.

Coming in she found Anne already full swing in her old home duties. She was turning over a basket of vegetables in the hall.

"How wet and delicious the things smell!" she exclaimed, as her sister entered. "Look, Pamela! We didn't see such a cabbage as that in London, did we?"

"No," said Pamela; "this is a grand place for cabbages."

As the girls grew older, almost of necessity their lives became somewhat less dull. Lesson times were over, and they had more freedom. Their grandmother, too, relaxed her rule a little. She was getting an old woman, for one thing, and the fact that her two elder grandchildren were each a good head and shoulders taller than herself may have made her a trifle less authoritative. Besides, in spite of their father's recluse life, the bright, pretty young girls made themselves friends among their neighbors. One acquaintance which Pamela made or revived about that time did much to enliven the whole of them, Mr. Burnet included.

It so happened that Pamela had gone with her father into Merehampstead one afternoon; and, as he had

some three-quarters of an hour's business to do, she proposed that he should put up the chaise at the King's Head, and give the little, long-tailed gray cob a feed.

"But where shall I leave you?" said Mr. Burnet. "You can't sit in the chaise if I put it up."

"You might put me down at the church-yard," she replied. "The church-yard is a prettier thing to look at than the front of John and Merriman's and you can call for me when Dobbin is put to."

Though the country is as flat as can be around Merehampstead, part of the town stands on high ground. In fact, the church and the High Street are built on the edge of a low cliff, down the face of which one or two flights of rough steps lead to some of the poorer houses and to the bank of the river. On the west side the ground slopes away gently to meet wide-rolling meadows; but on the east, or seaward side, this cliff stands like a wall, dividing the marshes from the fertile land on the other side of the town. The church-yard occupies the highest part of all; and Pamela always greatly enjoyed the outlook the elevation gives over the distant country. She had made many sketches of the place from memory, for to sit down with pencil and paper in the open air and draw in public was a proceeding which would probably have been considered too eccentric by the passers-by, and she never dreamed of making such an attempt. The church was a handsome stone building, with a detached tower which stood up bravely against the sky—the only ornament of the little ugly town with its raw, red-brick houses. It was a wholesome style of ugliness, though: they were honest red bricks, and would some day get mellowed into a pleasant color, as was already the case in some of the older parts of the town, where the houses were rapidly assuming the beautiful grays and purples which only wind and weather know how to lay on.

As Pamela seated herself on the edge of the low church-yard wall on this summer afternoon, the shadows

were beginning to lengthen a little, though the sun was far from setting as yet. The sky was lovely, with the peculiar beauty of lowland skies, where the clouds are mostly high and filmy, and seem in their level bars to follow the lines of the country below them. The river was glittering and quivering in the sun; long lines of birds went whirling out of sight in the brightness; and just down below nestled a little cluster of cottages, with their old, many-colored roofs, and the nettles growing here and there in the thatch.

Suddenly Pamela's attention was arrested by that curious throb in the air which precedes organ-playing heard at a little distance, followed by a great volume of music welling up from the church, making her look round with almost an expectation of seeing it hovering in some visible form over the roof.

She heard it with the more surprise because she knew that at that time the church had no organist. The vicar was an extremely secular old man, redolent of winey odors in his person, and, in his conversation, of thoroughbred pedigrees and the histories of rare vintages. His tastes in the way of music ran in the direction of the "Roast Beef of Old England" and the "Vicar of Bray;" and his detestation of what he called "howling psalm-tunes" had been a thorn in the side of the many unfortunates who had been selected to fill the post of organist in his church. The organ was a fine old instrument, and a rarity at a time when few of the neighboring village churches possessed anything better in the way of music than a few scrooping violins occasionally enlivened by a bassoon.

Pamela had but seldom heard it played; never except as the thin thread of a hymn-tune stringing together the unharmonious voices of the towns-folk on a Sunday morning. Now she heard the great voice let loose alone, subordinate to no weak wavering trebles or hard altos, and infinite wonder filled her soul as she listened to what things came forth from those dusky, neglected

gilt pipes. Two streams of music—one soft and low, yet strong as the wind that she had felt blowing east from the sea across her marshes on early spring days; the other high and sharp as the song of a bird which falls with sweet clearness from a cloud—these two going on together yet apart, touching for a chord or two, then flowing on again side by side, then strangely involved, crossing and recrossing like the lines of some wonderful arabesque, finally winding upward in thinner, keener spires; and vanishing suddenly into air like the flame of a burned-out fire.

The music had drawn Pamela nearer and nearer to the porch and half-open door. Once there, she waited even after the last echo had died away, hoping all was not over yet. Then when she heard steps coming quickly down the stairs she still lingered, from a shy dislike to be seen running away, and partly because in the descending musician she recognized an old acquaintance. The figure coming down the dark stairs was that of a man of about fifty, small and spare, and with a slight fall in the left shoulder, common to people who spend many hours over a desk. He had a long, keen face, made still longer in appearance by his stubborn gray hair, which slanted up stiffly from his forehead, and by his scanty, pointed beard, which growing altogether underneath his chin gave him a good deal the look of a goat. It was a hard, colorless face, but more delicate in its outlines than one gave it credit for at first sight. The immovability of his long, thin lips was, after all, only one out of a thousand expressions they were capable of as soon as he began to speak. In this person Pamela recognized the principal attorney of Merehampstead, also agent and man of business to Lord Lynton, by name Mr. Quicke, whom she knew just enough to feel somewhat shy of him. He came down the stairs at a great pace, head poking foremost, and had almost shot past her before he noticed the slim girl in the door-way; but when he did so he accosted

her with the grave importance of a man who seldom speaks to any woman except his maid-servant.

"I was listening to the music," explained Pamela when they had shaken hands; "I couldn't think who it was playing. I began to think Mr. Honeywood must have got a new organist, but I suppose he never means to now. Why don't you play the organ for us on Sunday, Mr. Quicke? Then we shouldn't hear old Roger and Jenks the butcher shouting in that dreadful way."

"Do they shout? Ah, yes, I dare say. But I never venture inside the parson's walls when he is there. I've enough of hearing people talk about what they don't understand of week-days in my profession. Sunday is my holiday, you see."

"Don't you go to church at all, then?" said Pamela.

"Oh yes! in my own way I do. I have been to church to-day. So you were listening to my playing, were you?" he added, as if glad to change the subject. "Do you care for music?"

"I don't think I ever heard much before to-day, but I liked that."

"Never heard much! Why, how is that? Your father used to be a great musician in his young days. I remember he used to play the fiddle. Why doesn't he teach you?"

"Because we are all girls, I suppose," said Pamela.

"Good heavens! What reason is that why you shouldn't play the fiddle?" exclaimed the old gentleman, falling into the broadest north-country accent in his indignation. "The old painters put fiddles into the hands of their angels, and now, forsooth, we are to be told a homely English lassie mustn't touch such a thing because it looks awkward; but the awkwardness isn't in the fiddle at all events."

"The angels!" said Pamela, laughing. "I thought they always had harps."

"*Then I would* rather stay down below and stick to

my old Cremona; for if there is anything I have a dislike to it is those fancy kind of instruments, harps and guitars, and the rest. But if you learned that idea from your tippling old parson here, my dear young lady, let me warn you that if he ever sees the inside of Heaven, he will most likely find a good many things there he does not expect, and on the whole, perhaps, Lippo Lippi might be taken as a better authority as to the fashions up there."

"It wasn't Mr. Honeywood," she answered; "and I don't know anything about the other person, I'm afraid."

"Come to my house some day, and I will show you something about him," said Mr. Quicke. "It is a small place, but big enough to hold some engravings and a few books, besides the violin and some stray old crockery."

"I should like to see the books," said Pamela.

"Ah, well! Come and bring a wheelbarrow, and you shall take away anything you like—that isn't unwholesome at least,—and you won't find much of that. Come on Saturday evening when I'm having my Yorkshire tea. You'll find those two lean young curates prowling outside. Ah! they scent my griddle-cakes from afar."

Mr. Quicke was strolling along with slow, lengthy steps, his hands clasped behind his back, his thin shoulders and hatless head poking very much forward. Pamela looked at him not without a suspicion that he was a little crazy. He was perfectly grave, but making the most grotesque grimaces imaginable.

"Don't you ever ask them in?" said Pamela, with a blush at her own boldness in joking to such a stranger.

"No, I don't. There's only one thing I keep more aloof from than a parson, and that is a parson's wife. Ah! here comes your father."

Pamela thought that as the two men shook hands some of Mr. Quicke's peculiarities seemed to soften *down a little,* that his hair bristled less fiercely, and the

angles of his person became less remarkable. They parted soon after, but in the meantime he had found an opportunity to repeat his invitation to Yorkshire tea to Pamela and her father, and Mr. Burnet had been unable to refuse, though Pamela could see plainly he thought the whole thing a nuisance. Perhaps Mr. Quicke saw it too; but he wanted the girl, and could not have her without her father. Besides, he rather enjoyed the society of a man so exquisitely tormentable as Richard Burnet.

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CHAPTER VI.

"I think the day's begun so sweet."

THE Yorkshire tea came off soon afterwards with great *éclat.*

"See," said the host, as he ushered his guests into his small sitting-room, "I have got out my best tea-cups in your honor."

"They are pretty," said Pamela, taking one up to admire. A wreath of roses went all round the cup, and the twisted stems formed the handle. She thought them quite nice enough to turn upside-down on the mantel-piece, like those Aunt Carry had sent her grandmother, but did not know they were rare old Dresden, worth two or three guineas apiece.

The tea-pot was of silver, but of monstrous design. It stood on four overgrown scrolls, and had a fish on the lid sticking up a forked tail by way of handle. The milk-jug was of common Delft, and looked like a scar among those lovely, delicate cups. The room contained the queerest extremes of richness and shabbiness, from the tazza of jeweled glass on which the fruit was piled, down to the old tattered cushion of Mr. Quicke's chair, which he picked up and dusted so reverently when it happened to fall on the floor, that Pamela concluded it must be a memento of some kind.

As for the tea, it appeared to be a sort of concentration of a sumptuous breakfast, an excellent cold dinner, *with two or three* desserts and suppers thrown in. It

included pink Yorkshire ham and substantial-looking pies by way of foundation, but these were almost lost sight of among the heaped-up dishes of fruit and preserves, and the variety of cakes which covered the table. The banquet was certainly more profuse than elegant, and Pamela thought as she sat down that there would have been plenty of room for the hungry curates.

She was a little nervous at having to pour out the tea, and had to take both hands to the huge tea-pot. Mr. Quicke's sugar, too, was difficult to manage: he evidently felt a grain too much or too little acutely, and the cream had to be apportioned to a drop. He was in a restless, excited state during the meal; and, except when he was pressing his good things upon his guests and trying to induce Pamela to spread strawberry jam upon her plum-cake, he was for the most part running about the room, fetching a book to confute Mr. Burnet, groping for some curiosity in the recesses of his cupboards, or turning round the blue china jars on the mantel-shelf to exhibit the other sides. Mr. Burnet was scholarly, coldly appreciative, and occasionally pedantic; but it was all grist that came to Pamela's mill. Mr. Quicke's cakes were delicious, his anecdotes were all spicy. She was delighted with the iridescent colors on a plate of Gregorio ware, though she thought the pattern of yellow figures and trees on a blue ground quite fearful. "I don't like it really to look at," she said; "but it's lovely to see."

"Ay!" said the old man, as he carried off his plate careful as a child with a jug of milk, "that's the weak point of modern ornamentations. They don't group or look well in a large, general way. You might furnish your house with Sèvres down to the wash-hand basins, and you would have beautiful scraps, and a muddle for the whole. Now, Palissy, Majolica, old Indian china —they are distant relations, but they agree, never mind how many they are. But bah! we don't furnish our houses with china nowadays; we eat off Delft, and put

our good things into dingy cupboards—so!" and he locked the door on his plate, and bustled back to the table.

Mr. Burnet remarked that he had an immense admiration for Sèvres porcelain. "What is a flower on a Majolica vase?" said he. "A mere lump, an excrescence, like nothing in nature. Now the ornamental flowers on a Sèvres cup are positively natural. I have seen roses which you might fancy you could pluck."

Mr. Quicke growled something about not wishing to pick roses on his tea-cup, and therewith they plunged into a discussion, in which Mr. Burnet laid down the law with authority, and Mr. Quicke grimaced and wriggled under the flood of information as if cold water were being poured down his back.

Suddenly a fit of recollection seized him about the Lippo Lippi, and he darted away in search of the portfolio, leaving Mr. Burnet with a half-finished sentence in his mouth, and looking somewhat disgusted. The Lippo Lippi turned out a very small affair after all, and was a mere disappointment to Pamela. It was a slightly-colored chalk sketch of the lower half of a picture apparently. Two or three female figures were seated on what might be the steps of a great throne, with quaint instruments of green wood, something like violins, in their hands. They drew the curved bows across the strings with dreamy, listening faces, and one or two had their lips parted as if they were singing softly. The picture ended abruptly above their heads: in fact, it had been cut off there.

Mr. Burnet looked at this work of art with a smile of easy contempt. He had once made a catalogue of Lippo Lippi's known works for that ill-starred book of his; but no such mangled work as this had been found there, and he was hardly the man to recognize half a picture. "I think you are a little mistaken about the sketch," he began, holding it up.

"*Do you?*" grinned Mr. Quicke.

"Do you happen to know by whom the copy was made, now? You see I take an interest in these questions. I have given some years to them."

"Oh! by a friend, a friend," said Mr. Quicke, hastily. "Miss Pamela, I am going to give you some music; so put your fingers in your ears if you don't like the real thing. See, it lives in this box, the little fiddle with the big soul."

"How curious that a really intelligent man should be so taken in!" meditated Mr. Burnet. "Lippo Lippi, indeed!"

At first Pamela thought she was going to be disappointed with the music as well as the picture, but it grew upon her, that thin voice that spoke more keenly than words, sweet, sad, unwilling, as it lingered on the air. The first burst was over, and the wailing air that followed it. They had come to a minuet, half stately, half quaint, in which the notes seemed to patter and point their toes; then came a graceful pose and sudden silence; then a quicker measure, followed by the same dainty chords and the first figure over again. At that moment the door opened, and everything ended with an awful crash.

"Mrs. Turrell, sir," said a sickly-looking young man from the doorway.

"Confound you, sir!" cried Mr. Quicke, producing a groan from the violin which made Pamela shiver. "Couldn't you wait till I had finished the movement? Get out! I'll not be interrupted in this abominable manner. You don't know how to behave, Mr. Todd. Come now, be off, avaunt!"—and he held the violin up in a manner which gave a hint that he had intentions of using it as an offensive weapon. But the sickly young man not only remained staunch, he even smiled faintly.

"Shall I say you are engaged, sir?"

"Show her into the back parlor, and go—do!" *(with a glare).* "*It is always* the way, always the way!

But I'm sorry, for you seemed to like the music;" and he packed the violin sorrowfully into its shabby case. "No, I may as well put it away for to-night; the thread is broken. But stay! I'll give you something to look at while I am away." He provided Mr. Burnet with a folio of Hogarth prints, and Pamela with an old missal with illuminated borders, and bolted out of the room just as Mrs. Turrell's gig drew up at the front door.

The sun was setting while the two sat there silently conning their books. It was a beautiful glowing sunset, and the rosy light was striking down the street, making the windows of the dull, little brick houses on one side shine like rubies. It was illuminating the sides of the Turrells' gig, too, and the broad back of Joe Turrell who sat holding the reins. Also it was kindling a second fire on the face of Joe's cousin Harold as he stood leaning against a post, and looking westward with those little, straining gray eyes of his, that looked as if they could never get themselves wide enough open.

On Pamela's missal page was painted a cluster of many heads, set close together, divided only by the sharp, golden glory surrounding each. Every eye was turned towards the Christ enthroned on fleecy white clouds at the top of the picture. On one side of these faces fell from thither a soft, white radiance—the pure light of heaven touching lightly on brow and cheek, and making the shadowed earthward-turned side look flushed and rosy by contrast. Those faces, once seen, never left Pamela entirely. They came back to her in after years in crowded London streets, and passed her solitarily between quiet country hedgerows. For, after all, they were only the faces of common men and women, such as one passes day by day without a thought; only here they had, it seemed, bathed away all the grossness of life in some great, unknown Lethe, and re-risen, half earthly still, yet divine in a new sense.

Then, after some time, she got up and went, with her *book still in* her hand, to the window. Looking out,

she saw the flaming sunset light to the west; then she turned and saw it shining on the back of Joe's coffee-colored coat and on Harold's windy-looking, flaxen hair; and in that moment it flashed across her that the saints in the picture were men and women in real truth —even such men as Harold Turrell, too, whose reputation was by no means that of a saint.

"Dear me!" said Pamela, surprised and confused; "I didn't know anybody was there. Shall I come round and let you in?"

"Well, no, thank you. Joe has got to hold the horse," said Harold.

"And what are you doing?"

"I was looking at the sunset till you came," said the young man, gallantly. "Since then I have been looking at you."

"Pamela, Pamela! who are you talking to?" said Mr. Burnet from within. So Pamela retired to digest what was certainly her first compliment, while her father took her post at the window and talked to Joe. Harold he disliked, and ignored as far as he could.

"Do you think," he said at last, "you and your aunt could find room for my little girl in your gig? A wheel of my chaise has loosened coming in, and I should like to leave it at Jackson's if I could. You can pack her in behind."

"Of course!" said good-natured Joe—"lots of room. But what'll you do yourself, squire?"

"I can get a saddle from the Dragon, and ride Dobbin, thank you. But I trust Mrs. Turrell won't think I am taking a great liberty." For as he was speaking, that meek-eyed lady and Mr. Quicke emerged from the front door on to the pavement.

Mr. Quicke made loud protests against losing his visitors so soon; but Mrs. Turrell welcomed Pamela very kindly, in her nervous way. "I'm sorry I can't offer you the front seat, dear; but I don't think I could *get up at the back there.* Ah! I was young and active *once; but we must all* take our turn."

Pamela went off to cloak and bonnet herself; sorry to go, and yet delighted at the prospect of the drive. Mrs. Turrell was womanly, kindly, and fidgety in her ways—so full of little troubles and anxieties, yet very lovable and motherly, Pamela thought, as the two thin hands fastened a warm scarf round her throat before she mounted to the little back seat of the gig.

It was a delicious and never-to-be-forgotten drive. Mrs. Turrell, when she was not nervously watching the horse past some such point of danger as a sharp corner or a heap of stones, or falling into panics about her parcels (for of course she had been shopping), found time to turn round and bestow many little kind speeches and nods and smiles upon Pamela—the more so, perhaps, that Joe was very gruff and shy over his driving, and did not invite conversation. Harold leaned back in his corner of the seat which he shared with Pamela, and seemed somehow to take up a great deal of room, though he was evidently trying to make himself very small. They went rattling down the High Street, where, through the gaps between the houses, they could see the gray-green marshes lying below. Business hours were over in Merehampstead, but the trades-folk were too socially inclined to shut up shop on that account, and were standing about at one another's doors gossiping cozily. At the King's Head the red curtain of the bar window was drawn aside to let in the evening air. Pretty Polly Anson, the landlord's daughter, was leaning against the doorpost in her lilac cotton gown; the battered portrait of King George the Third on the sign-board flapped lazily in its frame; an excited little dog ran out and barked at the gig as it passed, and would not go back, though Polly called to it and stamped her feet; and then they went sloping downhill towards the level country, while the houses became more and more scattered, and presently ceased, and they were out on the embanked road, which winds like a low wall across *the marshes.* The sun was quite down by this time,

but there was light enough left in the sky to make each bit of dyke and pool they passed bright as a topaz. The sky itself was pure pale yellow to westward, and across the clear space were still sailing the little, torn, gray clouds that had been crimson ten minutes ago. The east wind blew strong and fresh in their faces: Pamela had taken off her bonnet, and was listening as it rushed past her ears. A lock of her long hair got loose, and floated out behind like a flag. "Don't!" said Harold, from his corner, as she tried to recapture and fasten it among her plaits; and then for the first time she woke to the pleasant consciousness of being looked at. So soon, it seemed, the winding marsh road came to an end, and they turned to the left among hedge-sheltered lanes. They took a last look at the dusky, low-lying land, with its gleamy river; and at the bright sky with its few white stars; and then Pamela began to watch every tree enviously as she passed, for she knew they were getting very near home. Harold showed a sudden inclination to talk, as people will do when they know they are going to part very soon.

"Don't you think Rose Hall is a very pretty old place?" he asked. "It is just my idea of the right sort of house to lead a long life in."

"Is it? I suppose I'm too well accustomed to it ever to have thought whether it is pretty. We have lived there all our lives, you know."

"Yes, you were all born in the same old house, and your father before you. Now, that seems delightful to me. I never belonged to anywhere."

"No, indeed!" put in Mrs. Turrell from the front; "that you didn't! I have been shockingly bundled about the world since I was married, and my poor children, too; and since your poor dear father died there has been nobody to stand up for me, and isn't ever likely to be again, for it is not many, Heaven knows, that care for the widow and the fatherless."

"*You must have* almost grown into the earth of the

place like the flowers and trees in your garden," went on Harold, ignoring his mother's lamentation.

"Very like," said Pamela.

"Which is, after all, the right sort of life for a woman—calm and good and useful. Now, the women who grow up in large towns are almost always spoiled. There is nothing so repulsive to me as your London young lady, who is noisy and intellectual, and who has been everywhere and seen everything. Such girls upset all one's notions of a woman as a creature quite different from oneself, to be petted and beautifully dressed, and looked at and admired."

"Then of course it follows that we ought to remain profoundly stupid, and to go nowhere and see nothing in order that we may conform to your idea of a proper sort of woman to be looked at." Pamela was flushed and looked very angry, but in reality half the flush was from pleasure at being alluded to as a "woman," for that unhappy phrase of her father's, "my little girl," was still rankling in her mind.

"That's right, my dear!" said Mrs. Turrell. "Give him a good taking-down."

"It is much the happiest life for a woman," said Harold.

"I suppose women are different, like men, and don't all want the same sort of lives."

"Now, what sort of life do you fancy you want for yourself?" said he, with a broad smile.

"I wasn't talking about that," said Pamela, shyly, and shrinking into herself.

"I never can make out girls," said Harold; "they don't appreciate the inestimable blessing of having nothing to do."

"Of having only to do nothing that is worth doing, you might have said," she answered.

Soon the high wall and the poplars loomed in sight, and then the great iron gates. Anne and Emilia were *walking up and down* just inside with their arms round

one another's waists. Dobbin was being led off to the stable, for Mr. Burnet had already arrived. He came and lifted Pamela out of the gig. She kissed Mrs. Turrell, but did not offer to shake hands with either of the young men, for the shy fit was on her again.

"Well, little girl, have you enjoyed your day?" asked Mr. Burnet, putting his hand on her shoulder as they stood watching the gig drive off.

"Oh yes, father!" said she, caressing the unwontedly-tender hand; and that time she did not resent being called "little girl."

"How grand Pamela is!" said Emilia to her eldest sister. "Going out to tea alone and being driven home in the gig like that!"

"Nonsense!" replied Anne. "I dare say, my dear, you will go out to tea sometimes when you get bigger; and I'm sure I don't see anything so very grand about the Turrells' gig."

The fact was, both the girls were rather impressed, and full of curiosity to hear all that their sister had seen and done; though Anne left Emilia to ask the questions as soon as they got together, well knowing she would not fail to do so, and choosing to preserve on her own part a more dignified and uninquisitive demeanor.

"So that is the end of it!" thought Pamela, as they went into the house. "But it has been a good day at any rate." In the dim, polished dining-room the supper was laid, and the tall candles already burning,—two very feeble sparks in the midst of all that mahogany and dark leather. There were the willow-pattern plates laid out in a row, Mr. Burnet's jug of ale and a hunk of cheese; and Mrs. Burnet in her stiff-backed chair presiding over the empty table.

"You are all very late for supper," she said, looking at the three junior offenders. "Please to cut the bread, Anne. Richard, here is a letter for you."

Pamela tugged impatiently at her bonnet-strings as

she sat down, while Anne sliced away at the great loaf, and their father stood doubtfully turning over his letter.

"Something must be the matter," said Mrs. Burnet; "it is from your brother John. There is a Manchester post-mark on it. I never knew him write at any other time than Christmas and my birthday, except when that poor, sickly little Tommy died, or Mrs John had another baby. It can't be any more of them, I should say," added the old lady with a sniff; "but you'd best open it and see."

Richard and John Burnet were as much attached to one another as two middle-aged brothers who have nothing in common but some childish recollections are likely to be. John always wrote to Richard at Christmas, and Richard answered about New Year. Occasional turkeys and barrels of oysters passed between them at this season, but with such exceptions as these, and those Mrs. Burnet mentioned, there was but little communication between the families. But Mrs. Burnet and her son had their own reasons for some anxiety, as the latter considered the outside of his letter. It was a large, thick packet of blue, ribbed paper, elaborately folded and secured with many seals; such a letter as we may chance to come upon now in our father's or mother's old desk, with faded superscription and well-worn edges, and which we can scarcely fancy was once written in fresh black ink, and was the welcome bearer of real news and perhaps of something better than news.

"Well!" said Mrs. Burnet at last. "What is the matter, Richard?"

"Don't alarm yourself, mother: there is nothing wrong. It is a long letter. I will read it to you presently" (with a glance at the girls). "It seems John wishes his eldest boy to come and see us all, and make the acquaintance of his cousins. He is going to send him here for a visit, you understand, if you can make room for him."

"He might have waited till he was asked, then," said *Mrs. Burnet,* with sparkling eyes. "Rose Hall doesn't

belong to him yet, thank Heaven. What call has he got to come poking his nose here?"

"It will belong to him one day," said Richard, gently. "It is natural the young man should like to see the place. We have no right to say him nay, mother."

"Well, in my time it wasn't the fashion for folks to invite themselves to your house without saying with your leave or by your leave. Come now, eat up your bread and jam quick, Emilia, and be off to bed all of you. I want to talk to your father."

"What does it all mean?" asked Pamela, as they went up-stairs. "Why is grandmother so angry? and why should this house ever belong to him?"

"Don't you know?" said Anne. "Grandfather entailed Rose Hall long ago, so that none of we girls can ever inherit it. If father were to die before Uncle John it would go to him, and if not, the next male heir would be Cousin Johnnie; and we should all have to turn out of here to make room for him—we who have lived here all our lives. I don't wonder grandmother is angry."

But, in fact, the entail was all Mrs. Burnet's own doing. She had pressed it on her husband in the early days of their marriage, partly because she wanted to secure all she could for her favorite child; and partly because in her own family, which could boast of standing several rungs of the social ladder higher than honest Richard Burnet's, there was a small entailed estate which she felt formed one of their strongest claims to respectability. It seemed to her very hard that this fine scheme for increasing her eldest son's importance should only end in robbing his children of what should have been their portion. So she consoled herself with abusing John and his boy, and representing them as monsters of selfishness because they did not volunteer to cut off the entail. John in his letter had very discreetly avoided touching directly upon this dangerous point. He only wrote that he took it as a misfortune that circumstances had so separated him from his relations,

but he wished Johnnie to enjoy the advantages he had missed, and become known to his grandmother, uncle, and cousins.

Although Richard took it all quietly, as was his wont, he felt quite as great a distaste for the young man's visit as his mother did. He walked up and down his room restlessly enough that night, thinking of his three girls and their scanty fortunes. Once or twice he paused opposite a certain table, and turned over his dusty manuscripts impatiently. He would give up his thankless mistress, literature, take up his land, and try farming. He would try by pinching to insure his life for another thousand; and so on from one project to another till his head ached.

Pamela was waking too. She was leaning out of her window, with the moon shining on her white night-dress, watching the sleepy jasmine stars stirring among their leaves on the wall. She was thinking over her day smilingly, but her thoughts seldom got as far as the end of it, with Cousin Johnnie and the entail.

CHAPTER VII.

"No! those days are gone away,
And their hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the old downtrodden pall
Of the leaves of many years."

THE Turrells lived in a curious old house called the Mere Abbey, or more generally by the country folk, only "The Abbey." It was so old, so battered, and above all, so very queer in construction, that it was almost impossible to say where the abbey ended and the farm-house began; for the former had been built on to, and into the remains of the latter in some irregular, but not inharmonious manner.

The walls were of rough gray flint; and the roof, which had probably been restored at the beginning of the farm-house period, was slated; but the slates had become so encrusted with lichens and yellow mosses, that they looked almost as old and mellow as the walls. The windows were stone-mullioned, and here and there in the casements were found little stray bits of stained glass, set indiscriminately among the other panes—here a stiff hand holding a lily, there the cowled head of a monk with a glory round it. The entrance, which was through what was said to have once been the crypt, was the most ecclesiastical looking part of the building. Instead of ascending, one descended three or four steps from the door, and then found one's self in a spacious stone-paved hall, full of greenish light from the thick glass of the four large arched windows, outside which

the beech trees were waving and rustling their leaves. Inside the walls were ornamented with a medley of guns, fencing foils, fishing tackle, outlandish bridles, and such like; while (more in accordance with the original purposes of the building) one corner was occupied by some benches, and a small oak lecturn, from which old Mr. Turrell, Joe's father, had been accustomed to read prayers every morning to his family.

That Joe had discontinued this excellent practice does not signify either that he was an irreligious young man, or one prone to disregard his father's memory; but to read prayers, to utter the commands and promises of Scripture—particularly before a congregation who are obliged to come whether they like it or not—is a rather invidious thing for a young man, unless he has long habit, or, still better, some pastoral charge to carry him through with it. Joe had made one attempt since his father's death, and had failed. He unfortunately glanced up just as he was started in the lesson for the day, and the sight of white-headed Tim, the gardener, and old Mrs. Campeny, whose wrinkled hands had so often made his ears tingle when he was a very small boy, sitting meekly at his feet, was too much for his modest soul to bear. There would surely be a subversion of all decent order in the world were such a stripling as he to stand up and read the Bible to the likes of old Tim and Mrs. Campeny; so he shut up his book and beat a hasty retreat.

"And such a turn I hope I may never have again," said Mrs. Campeny afterwards; "for that white and ghastly he turned, that I thought it was nothing but heart-disease come on suddenly, as it often does."

Afterwards, when Mrs. Turrell came to live with her nephew at the Abbey, the morning prayers were resumed by her, and Mrs. Campeny took her seat under the new mistress with that kindly, condescending manner which she knew so well how to assume without *giving way* to any vulgar "airs." Of course she was

not altogether pleased at first at the advent of Mr. Joe's aunt. She had had the control of him ever since he cut his teeth; and though she was in the habit of declaring that the wish of her heart was to see her young master bring home a comely, thrifty wife, no one quite believed her. However, an aunt is a very different thing from a wife, and Mrs. Turrell's meek face and stupid, blundering ways soon completely disarmed Mrs. Campeny's antagonism. They became great friends, though their alliance was something on the terms of that between the lion and the mouse in the fable, and Mrs. Turrell always seemed to be remembering that she owed an immense debt of gratitude to Mrs. Campeny for not eating her up.

This wonderful little woman, with her bright eyes, her wrinkled hands, and her gentle voice, ruled every one who belonged to the Abbey,—and very rightly so, for she was by far the wisest person in her world, and, most likely, might have still remained so had her sphere been greater than it was.

For Mrs. Turrell's two daughters she had no liking, but set them both down, after their first visit to Mere, as "dressed out, affected young hussies." After the poor young governesses had gone back weeping to their respective situations, her heart melted a little, and she did her best to console their mother, making her hot tea-cakes on the evening of their departure, and even condescending to desire her "duty to the young ladies," in a letter soon after.

Harold was a great favorite with the "Lady Abbess," as he called her. She petted him as pretty old ladies often pet young men, and treated him with much more consideration than she did Joe, whom she always pretended to consider as a big and rather stupid school-boy.

"Joe is very well indeed," she once remarked to Harold. "It wouldn't be any advantage to him to have too much brains; *he* is clever enough for all he has to *do in the world; but it* is quite different for you. You

weren't born with so much as a pewter spoon in your mouth; you have got to make your own way in the world, and I wonder you don't set about it."

"With old Digby's office for a starting place, I suppose, and his confounded accounts of rotten bricks and bad mortar! If the way I am to make means following the steps of that old rascal, may I be hanged first."

"Try to get out of the office," suggested Mrs. Campeny. "Why not turn your musical talents to account, my dear? There is no knowing but you might come out a genius after all."

"What chance has a poor devil who is ground down to one jog-trot occupation from morning to night?" cried Harold, plunging about on his chair. "I can't even learn the A B C of my trade. Unless I can get out of that infernal builder's shop, I shall never be fit for anything but fiddling in a road-side inn. I don't know whether I have got anything in me or not," continued the young man, looking ruefully at his broad white hands. "But if I have, it is that and nothing else."

"I think so too," said Mrs. Campeny, gently; "but your mother doesn't see it in that way, and it would be a very great expense for her to send you abroad to study, or even to London. I don't see how she could afford it."

"Oh, for the matter of that, if I could only get time and rest I might have a chance. Give me a free world to go about in, with its sights and sounds, and a sheet of paper to write down what I see and hear."

"But you can do that much down here."

"Yes; at Digby's pleasure and for three weeks at a time; with the smell of the office in my nose, and the ghost of it before me and behind me."

Mrs. Campeny went on with the lace curtain she was darning in silence for about five minutes, then she laid aside her work, folded it neatly, and went out of the room, patting Harold's shaggy head with her pretty wrinkled hand as she passed. She was a little woman

who made up her mind rapidly, and then did not wait to let her decisions cool: so she made straight for a little room, or rather outhouse, which the master of the house called his office, and where she knew, at this hour of Saturday evening, she would find him settling his accounts after paying his men. She heard the final click of a cash-box as she opened the door.

"May I come in, Mr. Joe?" she asked, in the most humble and insinuating manner.

"Of course you may," said Joe. "What's the matter?"

"Nothing, nothing, my dear; but you seem very busy. Not done yet and it is almost supper time."

"It is a busy time, Mrs. Campeny, and hay-making coming on. You and Aunt Mary had better be thinking about your pies and things."

"Yes, there is so much to see to in a place like this. Do you know, I was just thinking what a nice thing it would be for you, Mr. Joe, if you had some one to help you in paying the men, and overseeing, and that, now the summer is coming on. You would get more done, and not run any risk of getting knocked up, my dear."

Joe's eyes opened wider and wider as he ransacked his brains to remember whether he had ever been "knocked up" in his life, and if so, how he had felt; but Mrs. Campeny, after a slight hesitation, went plunging on bravely: "Now, suppose you were to ask Mr. Harold to stop down?"

"Ha, ha!" burst out Joe. "Why, Mrs. Cam, you must be mad! I ain't a cripple yet, am I? And Harold—the fellow doesn't know a beet from a turnip!"

"Never mind," went on the unabashed old woman. "He is a clever youth; he will pick it all up very fast; and then, you see, he hates that builder's office; he thinks he might come to be a musician if only he could get time to study a little, and he has no one to look to to *help him but you, Mr. Joe.*"

"*Well, let him stop* here and welcome, and scrape

as much cat-gut as he likes; but I can't have him poking in my fields."

"But don't you see he can't stop on and on like that. He is much too proud, for one thing. You must make him think he is doing something for his keep, at any rate."

It ended, after much explanation on Mrs. Campeny's part, and many prayers on Joe's to be delivered from the dodges of women, in a promise from him to do exactly what he was told in his offers to his cousin; and so ably did Mrs. Campeny instruct him on this point, that Harold was positively induced to accept them, though he most likely saw more of the ins and outs of the arrangement than either Joe or Mrs. Campeny were aware of. And this is how Harold became regularly domiciled at Mere Abbey.

Mrs. Campeny, the mediator, never knew what passed between the two young men on the subject. Both giver and receiver were men of generous natures, and the yoke of obligation pressed as lightly on each of them as was possible; too lightly, Mrs Turrell sometimes thought, upon her son. This mother and son had that curious likeness and unlikeness to one another that we often find lurking at the bottom of family disagreements. They were both nervous, energetic, and somewhat flighty; but these qualities which were rampant and exaggerated in Harold, had in his mother been suppressed into a fidgety restlessness, which deprived her of even as much influence over the young man as her affectionate, but feeble nature might have rendered possible. His position in his cousin's house was a standing grievance to her. Sometimes she taunted him with it, sometimes she moaned over him, consistently she mourned his rejection of the chance Digby's office had given him of making a living, and condemned both his profession and his way of following it. He worked very hard by fits and starts, devoting the intervals to a thorough-going laziness, which

was enough to scandalize any respectable woman; and, though employment of a certain kind seldom failed him, he met with little enough encouragement as far as his own compositions were concerned.

He copied and transposed scores, made little arrangements of airs for a theatrical manager, and generally practiced himself in the drudgery of his art, earning about enough to keep himself in clothes and tobacco. Sometimes when he had made a lucky stroke he would break loose altogether from his uncongenial labors, and heedless of order or letters of remonstrance from his patrons would devote himself to a choral symphony, which was to form the foundation of his future fame, and which was to combine in itself all the science of past musical ages, with the complex passions and reflection of coming times. This great work went on till he found himself out at elbows, or with an empty tobacco-pouch, when he would plunge into his heap of neglected orders with all the energy of despair. Joe's pocket was always open to him; but, to do Harold justice, he never received anything in the shape of luxuries from the hand of his cousin.

For a short time he played the organ in Merehampstead church, but this part of his career was a terrible failure, and soon ended. The congregation vowed that no such distracting hymn-tunes had ever been heard as those he produced for their benefit, and that his voluntaries were enough to blow the roof off. Mr. Quicke was his only supporter; and as he never came to church, and was, moreover, an eccentric and unaccountable person himself, his opinion was not thought much of. It all ended one fine summer day when Harold came rushing into church, too late for the voluntary, and went clattering up to the organ-loft with creaking boots and flying hair, three steps at a time. In the Benedicite he put the final touch to his iniquities.

"I never heard anything so shocking in all my life," remarked Mrs. Burnet afterwards. "Every single thing

did that young man imitate—the sea, and the whales, and the cattle, till you might have thought you were in the play-house; and thunder and lightning fit to make your hair stand on end. If Mr. Honeywood means to carry on that sort of nonsense, it is but little of me he will see at church."

Even Joe was startled by the jubilant peals, and glanced at Mrs. Campeny to see if she thought it all right. There was a displeased pucker at the corner of that lady's well-cut, little mouth; indeed, she took Harold to task as they walked home across the fields. "It was beautiful music, my dear, and made one's heart joyful; but it wasn't fit for church—not according to old-fashioned ideas."

Harold had played himself out by that time, and was meek enough. "I'm afraid it wasn't," he said, hanging his head. "The fact is, I haven't purity of style enough to attempt church music at all yet; but you might make some excuse for a fellow forgetting himself once in a way, and it was such a jolly morning!"

Soon after this, as they had expected, his services were dispensed with. "Not that I dislike your music," explained the old vicar; "far from it, Mr. Turrell. You go the pace, and if there isn't much tune in it, I can't say it makes great difference to me; but you see the ladies don't like it. You are too loud for them, that's the fact. They like to hear their own voices best, and you don't give 'em a chance," he added, with a snigger.

Mrs. Campeny had to come to her *protégé's* assistance once more. This time she proposed that he should give music lessons, and even managed to procure him his first pupil. This was not such an easy task as might be supposed, for Merehampstead was somewhat neglectful of the arts, and considered piano-playing as an absurd refinement for any one below the rank of a squire's daughter. But Mrs. Cartwright, the banker's wife, had always held up her head above her neighbors,

and no doubt Mrs. Campeny took care to fan the spark of ambition into a flame, when she found the lady's desires took the form of wishing to bring up her daughter Julia "to hold her own with the best of them" in the matter of education.

Julia was a buxom, romping girl of fourteen, with irrepressible spirits and the best of tempers, but with a fervent and deeply-rooted hatred of music, which dated from the days when, as quite a little girl, she had been forced to sit on a high stool and play scales instead of running about in the garden. It may be supposed that this young lady, having after some years of application learned to play "The Blue Bells of Scotland" and "God save the King" with tolerable precision, considered her musical education had gone far enough, and felt much injured when she heard that Harold Turrell had been engaged on very liberal terms to give her some finishing lessons.

Certainly her treatment of her instructor was little short of barbarous. She was pert, sulky, or defiant, as the fancy took her. Sometimes she made fun of him to his face, sitting far back on the music-stool, with her shoulders hunched up to her ears, and her head thrust within an inch of her music, hitting off Harold's short-sighted and rather grotesque attitude so well that he recognized his own peculiarities, and burst into a roar of laughter. Occasionally these pranks had another ending: thoroughly roused, he would turn on his tormentor, and as he was gifted with a considerable flow of language, and energy of expression, he once or twice reduced Miss Julia to a flood of tears. His remorse when matters went to this length was quite heart-breaking to witness; indeed, Julia always knew that if he refused to yield to milder measures she could conquer him in this way, and she would take sly peeps at him between her sobs to see when he had had enough. Whatever *turn affairs* took, Harold always got the *worst of it.*

"La, now!" she exclaimed, one afternoon when the lesson had been even more stormy than usual, "you needn't put your fingers in your ears. I'm sure it can't be so bad as all that."

Harold stood up and shook himself. "I tell you what, Julia, I'll have no more of you. It is simply robbing your father to take money for teaching you. I believe you are a monkey in human shape. No being with a soul could have so little notion of music. Where is your mother? I am going to speak to her."

"You can't," said Julia; "she is out. And it is no good. Music I shall have to learn whether you teach me or no; but if you tell her that, she'll send you away, and I shall have old Miss Granby, from Stourton, and she'll be crosser than you—horrid old thing! Come now, sit down, and I'll play it sweetly this time;" and off she went again, tum-ti-tum, with her little fat, stiff fingers, accompanied by a deep groan from Harold.

He walked home that evening in a rather melancholy frame of mind. Success was so slow in coming to him, and when it did come it came ungraciously. Only that morning he had had returned to him the manuscripts of two out of three songs which he had sent to his publishers. Experience had taught him to look for the rejection of all three. So far the surprise was an agreeable one; but it galled him that the accepted was the poorest and slightest of the three, a trifle of which he felt ashamed now as he walked on recalling its imperfect composition and commonplace motive. Harold was not greedy; he made no excessive demands on Fortune: time and liberty to pursue his art, and of wealth enough to enable him to eat his bread in independence and peace, were all he asked. For these he was ready to give the best labors of his head and heart; but it seemed the world would have none of his work even at this moderate valuation; *perhaps he was not* worth even so much, thought the *young man as he* plodded on along the sloppy road.

It was a late October afternoon, with a chill blue sky and misty sunlight; the air was heavy with the scent of moist earth and fallen leaves; his boots sank deep in the clay soil as he went along with great strides impatient of the clogging odors and languid air. There is a sadness of the autumn when all is over, and a sadness of the spring when all remains to be done. Harold's mood was but little in harmony with the weather when he started on his walk. He set his face against the calm face of nature, like a fractious child flinging back the soothing hand of his mother. He would hug his grievances in spite of the patient, green, rain-drenched earth, and the soft sky, from which the clouds were washed away now. Who does not know how such a contest must end? The sun sank lower and lower, the shadows grew long. Harold's fists unclenched themselves in his pockets, he took shorter steps, and stuck less in the mud. Soon everything was turning to gold, the low hills on the horizon seemed melting into a glowing haze, the very nettles by the roadside were suffused with light, birds flew unawares into the stream of radiance from the west and flashed past him on gilded wings out again into the shade. He was conquered for that time at least, and his submission was not without its reward. Earth, air, and sky are merciful conquerors. Who can say into what glorious trio they interwove themselves for this penitent, or what rare secrets they imparted to him in these moments of calm and humiliation?

CHAPTER VIII.

"A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May."

BY the time Harold reached the Abbey the sun was down, and the western sky had faded into a clear green, barred here and there with long violet clouds. He bounded, singing, up the broad oak stairs, and flung open the door of the large, wide-windowed room, which had been made over to him by common consent as studio and sitting-room. It had long been called the best bedroom, and in old times had occasionally been occupied by some more than ordinarily honored guest. Most people, however, considered it too gaunt to be comfortable, until Harold discovered that it suited him exactly. The resonance of its old, wainscoted walls and oak-beamed ceiling delighted him; so did the broad, projecting window, with its view over garden and marsh land. Here, at least, his noisy individuality found space to expand; indeed, Mrs. Campeny affirmed he seemed to fill the room to the corners, though when he was out of it the great bare floor gave her the shivers.

In the centre stood a little, old-fashioned harpsichord, made long before the days of pianos, with rickety-looking spindle legs, and yellow ivory keys that seemed to have shrunk in their sockets; on it Harold's violin and a half-written manuscript were laid temptingly, but none of these wooed our young musician just then. He had quarreled with his mistress art; and though he had for-

given her now, he intended to flirt a little with her sister. He drew an easel to the window and sat down to paint the glowing sky, against which the yew trees in the garden reared themselves stiffly.

The long clouds were breaking up and warming from violet to crimson, from crimson to rose. Harold was not much of an artist. He searched for some color delicate enough to represent that tender flush in much the same bewildered simplicity as that of a child in its earliest daub trying to paint the sun with yellow ochre, and tried vainly to follow with accuracy the ever-shifting forms of the lighter clouds, till his work was interrupted by a knock at the door, which presently opened to admit the head of Jenny, the dairy-maid.

"Here is Master George Lynton wanting you," said Jenny. "He is a-coming up-stairs."

"What on earth does he want?" said Harold, too much absorbed to see that the stranger was already at the door. "I suppose it is a mistake, and he wants Joe. Now trot off, Jenny, like a good girl."

"Excuse me," said the new-comer, hesitating on the threshold. "I have just seen your cousin; he told me I should find you indoors. But I am afraid I am intruding into your *sanctum sanctorum*. However, as I am so far, may I come in? It was Jenny's fault, you know."

"Oh, of course; please come in. Sit down," said Harold, confused. "I'm sure I beg your pardon; people don't often come here to see me. I know Joe has some business with Lord Lynton; I thought most likely you wanted to speak to him."

"Has he? I know nothing about it; but I mean the troubles of life to begin for me soon. I have been too little at Stourton to know anything about the property, and my grandfather likes to do everything himself —an arrangement which has suited both of us excellently *so far.*"

Harold looked at his visitor in some astonishment.

The age and history of Lord Lynton's grandson were too well known in the neighborhood for him to be unaware that this glib young gentleman was no more than sixteen years of age, and was lately come home from Eton, otherwise he would have thought him much older. He was a slim, well-made youth, not particularly tall for his age, and with a face which seemed to Harold the perfection of boyish beauty.

His chestnut hair was as bright and soft as a woman's, and his features regularly and finely chiseled enough to raise a doubt as to whether he would not make a somewhat effeminate-looking man a few years later, unless, indeed, that slightly aquiline nose and the deep cleft in the chin held resolution enough to keep brow and lips in check. In dress and manners he was clearly a beau; and Harold, who at four-and-twenty had still a good deal of the school-boy in his composition, felt half angry, half amused, at his airs, and swore at him internally as a young puppy.

"The fact is, I came to ask you to give me some organ lessons," went on George, apparently quite ignorant of the effect he was producing. "We have a very fair instrument in the music-room at Stourton. It is not equal to the Merehampstead one, though, but it will do to begin with. By the way, I am sorry you have given up playing in the church. I only heard you the first Sunday after I came down. It was quite a delightful surprise."

"My music didn't suit them," said Harold grimly, "nor I either."

"I don't suppose it did. You forgot to begin with the milk for babes. You played a lovely little fugue that Sunday, I remember. I have often wondered since what it was; but fancy playing Bach—it might have been Bach—to such an audience of bumpkins!"

"The fugue was my own, and I shouldn't have said *there was* anything very abstruse about it; besides, no *one ever thinks* of listening to the voluntary."

"It was your own!" said George, very gravely. "Then, Mr. Turrell, let me congratulate you, and at the same time apologize for having dreamed of your wasting precious time in giving lessons to a blunderer like me." He had risen and was holding his hat in his hand, with the evident intention of going. Here was Harold with a most promising and profitable pupil in the very act of slipping through his fingers, and able to think of nothing more brilliant to do than to gnaw the end of his paint brush in a fury of stupidity and vexation. It was well Mrs. Campeny was not there to see. But luck was in his favor this time. The unfinished painting saved him; it caught young Lynton's eye as he turned to go.

"Ah!" said he, "I have spoiled your sketch; these five minutes have changed everything. No, don't put it away. It was a fine sky, and your picture is a daring attempt. How could you expect to draw those mazy outlines of the higher clouds, though? And the pure glow of color underneath, which you might have managed, you have not even tried!"

"I couldn't get the color, nor anything near it."

"Give me your paint brush. May I try? I think I recollect how it was, and something like the shape of that great cloud with the torn edges."

"Oh yes, do," said Harold, pushing the table of apparatus nearer to him; "you can't spoil it, any way."

George laid a broad wash of greenish blue over the lower part of Harold's picture, and dashed in the heavy lines of cloud with a rather irreverent hand. It was not a very artistic performance, though there was some feeling for color and much impudence displayed in it. Harold thought it an achievement little short of miraculous, and looked on with immense enthusiasm and excitement.

"You have got nearer it in two minutes than I should have in a *life-time*," he cried. "Wash out those fluffy *little clouds of mine* above; they are a disgrace to it!"

"My dear fellow, don't you see how carefully I have been sparing them," said George. "There is more drawing in any one of them than in the whole of my splashing."

"Ah! but the color, the color."

"A fairly good feeling for color is the commonest thing in the world," said George, sententiously; "but a knowledge of drawing shows a man has some stuff in him."

"If you can play as well as you paint you don't want any lessons from me," said Harold, as he watched the rapid brush dabbing away at a very dark green yew tree. "Will you really give me lessons, though?" asked George. "At least, are you sure you might not do better with your time?"

"Time is the one thing I have enough and to spare of," answered Harold. "I shall be very glad to give you lessons; but I give you notice, I don't know for the life of me how to set about it. I can play a thing if you set it before me, but as for showing any one else how to do it—"

"All right," said George; "example is the very essence of teaching. I have theories of my own on that subject. I will teach you how to teach and you shall teach me how to play—if I prove teachable. Have you no crimson lake here? Ah, there it is,—but what a mess you have made of it. You will never paint if you don't keep your things clean and tidy so that you can get a bit of pure color when you want it."

The two young men went on chatting and painting, getting very friendly over their work, until it was quite dusk, when they had to turn their attention to other objects. When the violin and the old harpsichord had been inspected, the room itself, with its dark wainscot and carved mantel-piece, came in for its share of admiration. Harold was jumping backwards and forwards over an arm-chair, to show the solidity of the oak floor, when they were interrupted by the appearance of Mrs. Turrell.

"And how do you do, Mr. George? I'm sure it is most kind of you to come and see us," said the good lady, her cap-strings flying abroad in a state of gratified excitement. "And to think of Jenny showing you up into this lumber-room! She is only the dairy-maid, you see, and not accustomed to our ways in the house; only she does love meddling with what isn't her work, so I do hope you will excuse her. Not that there is any excuse for her, for I saw you coming along the road, and I said, 'Now, Jenny, here is Mr. George Lynton coming, and if he gets off his pony be sure you ask him to step into the best parlor while you send for your master.' And just to think of her bringing you up here!"

"I am sure your intentions were as hospitable as they always are, my dear madam," said George, with his best bow, which, to do him justice, was always equally at the disposal of any female of whatever age, appearance, or position. "But it was your son I came to see, and I am much obliged to Jenny for introducing me to the most delightful of rooms, even in this quaint house."

"Ah, now you are making fun of us," said Mrs. Turrell. "But young gentlemen will have their jokes, I know: and I'm afraid Harold hasn't been amusing you as he ought. I haven't even heard him playing any of his pieces to you. But I hope you will come downstairs and sit awhile, Mr. George. We are not alone, either, this evening. Squire Burnet's two eldest girls are drinking tea with me; and if you would have a cup with us, we should all take it most kindly of you, I'm sure."

If George had had time to refuse before he got out of the room he would most likely have done so, for it was near the dinner hour at Stourton, and he knew his grandfather never waited for any one; but Harold was banging his music-books about, and whistling impatiently, and Mrs. Turrell was talking so fast, that he could not get a word in till they got to the bottom of

the staircase, and then he saw such a pretty picture that his intention first faltered, and then broke down.

To his left hand a door stood open, revealing a large room in whose polished floor the great oriel window, with its clustering creepers, and the sunset glow beyond lay mirrored as in a lake. A round table spread for tea stood on a square of carpet in front of the fire, where, on a soft, furry rug, the trim figure of Anne Burnet knelt, engaged in the toasting of a tea-cake. Beyond her stood Pamela, her tall person propped up against the chimney front, her head leaning against the blue tiles, and a little, tabby kitten nestled confidingly against her cheek, while her eyes roamed dreamily into the fading saffron of the sky. The centre of the hearth-rug was occupied by no less a person than Mr. Quicke, who sat on a little, hard-looking wooden chair, with his head cocked on one side, his legs crossed, and a book in his hand from which he appeared to derive much inward satisfaction, for he chuckled frequently, elevating his eyebrows at that sharp angle which we always associate with the facial contortions of Mephistopheles, and bristling up his short, stiff gray hair like a porcupine's quills.

"You are very kind," said George; "and if you won't think me rude if I just take a cup of tea and then start home—" And so Mrs. Turrell carried her young sprig of nobility into the parlor triumphing, and there was much shaking of hands and unnecessary introducing, for Mr. Quicke was Lord Lynton's agent, and had known George and his father, too, when they were babies in arms; and as for the Burnets, though they and he had not met face to face since all three were children, they were as fully aware of his existence and identity as if he had been the Prince of Wales.

Soon Harold came clattering down-stairs; then Joe made his appearance, looking rather uneasy about the elbows, for his aunt had privately conveyed to him an intimation not to come to tea in his old snuff-colored

coat; lastly came Mrs. Campeny to pour out the tea, an office which Mrs. Turrell had never ventured to arrogate to herself. Anne got up from her knees looking rosier that ever, and Pamela restored the kitten to its mother who had been prowling restlessly about her feet, and they sat down to tea.

"I must put in Mr. Quicke's sugar," said Pamela. "No one else understands it."

"That's a good girl!" said the old gentleman. "There, you have given me just a grain too little; but it is a fault on the right side."

"Have another lump, sir," said Mrs. Campeny.

"No; it is too near for that. I won't risk it. I don't dislike my tea in the minor key sometimes. And when are you going back to Eton, pray?" he continued, turning to George.

"Not at all, I believe. Eton is inspiring for a year or two, after that it becomes brutalizing."

"Why, you can hardly be going up to Oxford yet?"

"Oh no, not for another three or four years, I hope; I have a fancy to spend part of the time abroad, at a foreign university most likely, and part at Stourton: I want to learn something about the property. I have been thinking of coming to you to help me, sir."

"I'll do that; but you couldn't have a better instructor than your grandfather."

"Unfortunately, like other prophets, I am not believed in my own country," said George, smiling. "If I ask the meaning of anything he thinks I am wanting to air some theory of my own, and accuses me of being a Red Republican and wanting to upset everything."

"And what says he to your foreign university plans?"

"He doesn't like it at first, of course. But I hope o convert him."

"He is a fine English gentleman of the old school, is Lord Lynton," said Joe. "I don't suppose he thinks over *much of book learning*; but to see the seat he has *on a horse at his time* of life is something beautiful.

I only wish I may have such a grip when I'm over eighty."

"There is nothing like the force of inertia to get one through life," remarked Harold, dreamily. "If one never thought about anything one might last a long time; but on the whole I'd rather not."

"You'd better have some tea-cake," interrupted Mrs. Campeny, nervously; but George only burst out laughing.

"I suppose I shouldn't have said that," whispered Harold to Pamela as the others went on talking. "It is quite evident to me the Lady Abbess wanted to stop my mouth with this slice of tea-cake, but it is absurd to suppose that any fellow would be offended by what one said about his grandfather, isn't it? For instance, when I said this afternoon that Mrs. Burnet was rather a bore, you didn't mind, did you?"

"Not much," said Pamela, penitently; "but I'm not at all sure that I oughtn't to."

They were a very merry party; the girls were pretty and good-tempered, Mr. Quicke abounded in dry little jokes and queer stories, while Joe carved the ham in a masterly manner. George recollected the long dinner table at Stourton, with his grandfather grumbling over the soup at one end while his mother subsided into graceful dullness at the other, and he determined to brave the authorities and stay where he was. He had fallen in love with Mrs. Campeny already. The little lady had touched up her curls and had put on her best cap and prettiest smile in his honor. She chatted on about old times, when George had come to drink fresh milk at the Abbey as a little fellow in petticoats. "You had a tiny brown donkey," she said; "and sometimes Mrs. Lynton and your father would ride over and take you back. What a fine figure she was in those days! and such a splendid horsewoman!"—touching things with such delicate fingers, and throwing such a veil of antiquity over it all, that even George's boyish dignity was rather soothed than offended.

"She is the most beautiful woman I know now," cried he, with enthusiasm; "though even I can remember that she has changed since my father's death. I can just recollect her dimly as she was before then, when she didn't always wear black dresses. We were in Italy, you know, and she used to have thin, floating white things. When I try to bring it back more clearly, I find myself mixing her up with the pictures in the churches."

Mrs. Campeny sighed. "It is always the cold-blooded women who are worshipped in this manner," she thought, glancing back at her own hard experience with some bitterness of soul. But all she said was, "it must be nice to have a grown-up son to say such pretty things of one."

"There are some people who cannot fail to provoke pretty things, even without that advantage," replied George, with his grave bow which made Pamela's eyes twinkle.

"Did you ever see such an old-fashioned little fellow?" she said to Anne, as the party round the table broke up.

"I think he is a nice boy, dear," said Anne. "He is a little prim, certainly; but that will wear off as he gets older, very likely."

"Yes, I dare say by the time he is fifty he may be quite boyish and unaffected," answered Pamela, turning to the fire.

"Come, girls," cried Mr. Quicke, "I have just hit upon a nice little lesson for you. Put your hands behind your backs and listen."

"Please excuse that, on account of the kitten," said Pamela, meekly.

"Now, then," he began, beating time with one finger:

> "'I know a thing that's most uncommon
> (Envy be silent and attend),
> I know a reasonable woman,
> *Handsome* and witty, yet a friend.'

—*Does anybody here* answer to the description?"

"That's not fair," said Pamela; "you must do as Pope did, and find it out for yourself."

"Let's hope we are reasonable at least," said Anne. "I don't know about the handsome and witty."

"And I'm sure women are none the better for being witty," chimed in Mrs. Turrell; "the men can't bear it."

"A libel, Mrs. Turrell!" cried George.

"It is quite true," said Harold. "I do hate a clever woman, by Jove!"

"The feeling of inferiority is not pleasant," remarked Pamela, in a sympathizing tone; "it takes some people a long time to get accustomed to it."

"You are too clever by half yourself," retorted Harold, "and that's why you didn't like the remark."

"Come, come, young people, don't fight. Listen to the next verse:

'Not warped by passion—'"

began Mr. Quicke.

"But that is just what she is!" cried Harold, pointing to his adversary. "Didn't you see how she stamped her foot just then? She is handsome and witty, and most confoundedly unreasonable. They all are. She is dangerous when her eyes flash like that. Thank heaven, she is nursing the kitten. May that soften her obdurate heart!"

"The race of paragons is extinct," said Mr. Quicke, throwing down his book. "Come, Harold, give us some music, and let order be restored."

They gathered round the fire with no other light than the blazing logs of old ship wood which were sparkling and spluttering on the hearth, and throwing up lovely flames of rose-color, purple, and violet, such as only sea-beaten wood knows how to make. Harold sat in the midst with his long, light hair shaken back, and the glow falling on his face and the hand that held the bow as he played. Pamela had got back to her old

place by the chimney and was listening in a happy dream, quite unconscious that George Lynton was staring at the halo the firelight made as it filtered through her rough brown hair. Mr. Quicke laid his delicate, little, taper hand on the young musician's arm as he finished, and presently said, "Good boy," in such a musical tone that every one looked round with a start.

They all drew a long sigh when presently Mrs. Turrell came bustling in and said, "Have you been sitting in the dark all this time? Dear me, I must light the candles and bring you some mulled elder wine before you start, to keep the cold out; it's a raw night."

"Why, what is that you have got in your hand, Joe?" cried some one when the unwelcome lights were brought and had set them all blinking.

Joe blushed up to the ears. "It is Miss Anne's pocket handkerchief," said he, displaying a small square of crumpled cambric with a stamped pink border, such as young ladies considered rather smart in those days. "I'd quite forgotten it."

"Thank you," said Anne, very demurely, poking it into her pocket. "I suppose I had dropped it."

Then there was the bustle of the start, and much packing up of the girls in cloaks and hoods; and in a few minutes they and Joe, who was to drive them home, were rolling down the path between the yew trees in the gig with which we became acquainted on a former occasion, and George had started on his solitary ride.

"What a pleasant evening we have had!" said Anne, who was sharing the front seat with her host.

"I know I have," said Joe, gruffly; and then after a pause—"When will you be over again, now?"

"Oh, I don't know; not just yet, I think. You know we are rather busy just now; we are expecting our Cousin John from Manchester next month, and there is a good deal to get ready one way and another."

"Oh, *your Uncle John's* son—the cotton-spinning fellow?"

"Yes," said Anne, in a gentle, self-satisfied tone, as if he had paid her a compliment.

"Hang him!" said Joe, giving his horse a sharp cut.

"You shouldn't talk like that," said Anne, severely.

"Didn't you see how he stumbled?" answered Joe, becoming suddenly interested in the horse. "It is sheer carelessness, and I don't want to have him with broken knees."

Anne had a pretty little flush on her face when the two girls made their appearance before their grandmother, but was quite as self-possessed as usual, and went up to kiss her father who sat crouched over the fire with inky fingers plunged in his hair. "Why didn't you come to fetch us, father?" she said.

"I have been busy and am very tired," he replied; and indeed he seemed too weary even to care to hear Anne's gentle gossip; so the sisters betook themselves to their own room, where Emilia's small, night-capped head was immediately popped up all agog for news.

"Fancy your going out to tea with Mr. Lynton!" she said, when her curiosity was a little satisfied. "He is the Honorable George, you know—the Honorable George Lynton. I do think it was very unkind they didn't ask me. I should so like to have seen him, and perhaps we may never have another chance. And is he very handsome, Pamela?"

"He is a pretty boy," said Pamela, who was sitting on her sister's bed unplaiting her hair.

"And what did he do? Did he talk to you much?"

"Oh no; that couldn't be expected of an Honorable, you know; but he did some very curious things. He put jam in his tea, and turned the cup upside down when he had done, to show he wanted some more."

"Oh!" cried Emilia.

"Get into bed, Pamela, and don't tell such stories," said Anne. "Poor little Milly, she is on the point of crying."

"Oh, don't cry, Milly, darling!" exclaimed penitent

Pamela, throwing her arms round her sister. "I'll tell you it all as true as true to-morrow; only you are such a little sycophant, you know."

"I wish you wouldn't call nasty names," sobbed Emilia; "and I don't know what they mean either."

Meantime, Joe was jogging homewards, driving less carefully than was his wont, and thinking much of Anne Burnet—how fresh and pretty her complexion was, what a pleasant smile she had, and how handy and quick she was in household matters. "I suppose she will be getting married and going away some day," he said to himself, sadly. "After all, it is natural for a man to like to have a wife and young uns of his own. I might have done it myself if things had been different. Well, some day, perhaps, when Harold gets on and can look after Aunt Mary, and if Polly and Nelly are settled—but, Lord! Anne will be snapped up long before that. I don't make much doubt it is her that money-grubbing young cousin is coming to look after; and I don't know anybody I should care for except Anne."

Joe had taken his poor relations under his wing without making any calculations as to what sacrifice the charge might entail upon himself, simply because it was not his nature to see any of his kith and kin want, and withhold his hand from helping them. He was beginning to find out that the cost might be heavier than he had dreamed of; but no idea of repenting of his good deeds crossed his mind. He would have quite failed in the attempt to picture himself as having taken any other course if he had tried to do so, but he just accepted the situation as a dispensation of Providence, and looked out keenly for better times without repining.

Nevertheless, his aspect was somewhat gloomy as he came into the parlor lately so cheerful, now occupied only by Mrs. Turrell, who sat mournfully regarding the fire. "Mr. Quicke is in there with Mrs. Campeny," she whispered, pointing to the next room. "They have been closeted together ever since you went. I am so

afraid something is wrong. If it is old Lloyd's will, why can't he tell me about it instead of Mrs. Campeny? It is not her business, I'm sure."

"Never mind, Aunt Mary: you had better go to bed. I dare say they are only having a gossip." But though he said so, he was a little curious himself, and in spite of his sleepiness, kept his position by the fire till he heard the old lawyer's shambling horse trot off, and Mrs. Campeny came in bearing the bedroom candlesticks.

"What on earth has that old fellow been keeping you up till this time of night for, Mrs. Cam?" asked Joe.

"He wanted to have a little talk with me; and you young people made such a disturbance, he had to wait till you were gone. It is only struck ten."

"What does he want talking secrets with you?"

"Now, who talked about secrets, Mr. Joe?"

"What is it then? I can see there is something going on, you know."

"Pickled walnuts, my dear;" whispered the old lady confidently, and she handed him his candle, which, as Joe was a wise man and well accustomed to his housekeeper's peculiarities, he took without another word and went off to bed.

CHAPTER IX.

"She had the low voice of your English dames,
Unused, it seems, to need rise half a note
To catch attention,—and their quiet mood,
As if they lived too high above the earth
For that to put them out in anything."

GEORGE LYNTON slept sweetly after the mulled elder wine, and dreamed a delicious dream, in which he was dimly conscious of a tabby kitten who was playing in the most heavenly manner on the violin; but when be began to look at her, he found the circling gray eyes were Pamela's. She was standing in her straight woolen gown against the sunset sky, and then Harold came and touched the violin, and she immediately played a horrible discord and everything turned to confusion.

It was a dewy, bright morning when he came downstairs. His grandfather was trotting briskly up and down the sunshiny terrace, accompanied by a little, rough, Scotch terrier, of as great age and activity (comparatively) as her master, while Mrs. Lynton watched him from the breakfast-room window, shivering slightly as the old gentleman paused at a windy corner, his long, white hair blowing about in the autumn breeze.

"Where were you last night, George?" she asked her son as the three sat down to breakfast.

"I went over to the Abbey and had some tea there. I found such good company, I couldn't tear myself away. You didn't wait for dinner, I hope?"

"*I should think not, my lad,*" said the old lord—

"neither for you nor your betters. However, I'm glad to hear you were at the Abbey. I like Joe Turrell: he is a good farmer, and no nonsense about him—like his father was before him, and his grandfather too. By the Lord Harry, it is queer to think that his grandfather and I have been out bird's-nesting together many a time when we were youngsters! Joe keeps up the old breed, and I hope he'll live to be as old as I am. You don't, George, with your confounded dandified airs."

"I dare say he is a very good fellow," answered George, passing over the last remark, "but I went chiefly to see his Cousin Harold, the one who plays the organ, you know. I want him to give me some music lessons."

"My dear George!" interrupted his mother. "That wild young man? He plays most dreadfully. Surely you might teach him."

"Music lessons!" thundered Lord Lynton. "Good heavens! who do you belong to, George? not to me, I'm sure, nor your father either. At your age he would as soon have thought of sitting down to stitch at his mother's sampler as of scraping at a fiddle."

"If you go a little farther back in my pedigree, sir, you will find my taste for fiddling is purely hereditary—witness the picture of Sir Gregory with his guitar."

"Sir Gregory be hanged! He ended his days on Tower Hill, remember."

"Then I suppose he was hanged—or something very like it; but that was rather a heavy punishment for playing the guitar, wasn't it?"

"You'd do better to imitate your ancestors instead of laughing at them, sir," cried the old man, striking his fist on the table. "Sir Gregory died like a brave and loyal gentleman for his king and country, and may he have a better representative in the next generation than he has in this."

"Amen to that," said George. "But if he derived so much inspiration from his guitar, why may not I from *my fiddle? It* is the better instrument."

"Was any one else there?" asked Mrs. Lynton, trying to make a diversion.

"Oh, yes. There was old Quicke, and two young damsels from Rose Hall."

"The Burnets? Were they? I wonder at that. I don't think Mrs. Burnet should let them associate with those rough young Turrells; their mother was a very sweet woman and quite a lady, and the girls are pretty: they ought to make good matches, but I dare say that horrid old woman will stand in their way."

"Much more likely their fool of a father will," said Lord Lynton, ramming in the shell of his egg. "But of course it is always the old ones that do the wrong thing. Now, I should have called Mrs. Burnet a sensible canny sort of body. I can always get on with her very well."

This was a favorite remark of the old gentleman's and one which he considered conclusive. The "getting on" generally consisted in his flatly contradicting his acquaintances and laughing at their opinions. If they objected he set them down as opinionated jackasses; if they submitted he took vast credit to himself for amiability and popularity. As he was by far the greatest person in his neighborhood, the matter generally ended in the latter manner, and taken in this sense he certainly got on with a large majority of those he came in contact with.

Mrs. Lynton only shrugged her shoulders and quietly sipped her tea. George was not so wise.

"A man ought to be able to get on with his contemporaries," said he. "They look at things from the same point of view. The thing that really shows sympathy—what you call power of getting on—is for a man to agree with those much older or much younger than himself."

"I'll tell you what shows impudence," retorted his grandfather, "and that's for a young fellow like you to sit down and lecture his own grandfather."

"I really beg your pardon, sir; I assure you I had no intention of doing any such thing; I merely wished to discuss."

"It is not customary, sir, for a man of my age to discuss with a school-boy."

"Apparently not," said George, coolly. "If you'll excuse me, mother, I'll go back to my reading."

"A nice young rebel you have made of that boy, Augusta," broke out the old lord as his grandson disappeared. "A rebel and a milksop at the same time, with his argumentative airs and his delicate, fiddling fingers. We have had one sort and another in the family before now, but to produce a fool was reserved for your generation. Not that it is so much his birth as his bringing up, I believe; he must have some of the good old blood in his veins anyhow—but I'll be hanged if I know what I've done to deserve such a grandson," he ended, with a groan.

"Shall I give you some tea?" was all the answer the lady of the house made. "And please, grandpapa, don't eat any more of that *pâté*; you know it is so bad for you."

Mrs. Lynton was a woman with a very calm temper. She disliked a high wind that ruffled her hair and disarranged her dress, or a quick walk that made her hot and flushed; but for these domestic storms and scuffles she cared but little. In the aristocratic family to which she belonged it had been the fashion for the men to be extremely fiery and high-spirited, and for the women to yield them unqualified submission. She had never got quite accustomed to the gentle devotion her husband had paid her during the five years they spent together, and perhaps in her heart of hearts had thought none the better of him for it. On the whole she felt more at home with her irascible old father-in-law, or with George, who was very affectionate to her but just a little overbearing sometimes.

She was a tall, graceful woman, handsomer in middle

age than she had been in youth, with a rather monotonous sweetness of manner which was apt to become cloying if one had too much of it. Her life at Stourton was very dull, and it was no wonder that her son's visits were events to be looked forward to by her, and treasured day by day as they passed. Still she hardly liked his plan of leaving Eton, and would have persuaded him to return if she could. Lord Lynton insisted that he should do so, and refused to hear any arguments about it; yet in the end George got his own way, as we have seen, and his grandfather had to console himself with making small jokes on the lad's unwillingness to return to school—"Well, I wouldn't have hung out the white feather when Black Monday came when I was a youngster;" and so on;—all of which George, having carried his point, bore with most aggravating good temper.

No one could say he exactly wasted his time. He read classics with old Mr. Honeywood, besides studying by himself for some hours every day; the rest of his time he devoted to his own favorite avocations (including the music-lessons), and also to learning something about farming and the management of the property which would one day be his, in which pursuit he received a good deal of help from Mr. Quicke. The Abbey was his frequent resort, though, of course, the music-lessons were given at Stourton.

"I can't think what you do there," said Mrs. Lynton, one day. "You say they have no musical instrument but an old harpsichord and an indifferent violin; so you can't even practice, yet you spend hours and hours of your time there. Surely the company of that shaggy-headed young man can't be so attractive as to take you altogether away from your mother?"

"No one is half so attractive as my mother," said he, gayly kissing her; "but you mustn't abuse my friend: there is more in his shaggy head than in most people's smooth ones, *I can tell* you."

"I wish you would let me bring Harold in to see

you some day," he begged, on another occasion. "You don't know what an agreeable fellow he can be if he likes."

"Pray bring him if you like," she answered. "I don't suppose it will be a particularly gratifying interview either to him or to me; but if it pleases you, my dear boy, that is enough."

So a few days later Harold, rather against his will, was ushered into Mrs. Lynton's pretty, bow-windowed sitting-room, where she sat by the fire with some flimsy scrap of lace-work in her hand. At the first glance he was quite fascinated with both the room and its occupant. Outside it was a raw, foggy November day: here the beauties of summer and the comforts of winter seemed to reign side by side. A beautiful crimson rose in full bloom stood in the window, and there was a bouquet of flowers on the table which gave a faint scent to the air. Besides these real blossoms the painted ones on the carpet and on the coverings of the chairs gave a summer brightness to the room, and the odors of the red rose were mingled with wafts of sweetness from a huge china jar of *pot-pourri* which stood in a corner. China abounded: there were plates, cups, saucers, and queer little figures on every shelf and table, and more tea-pots of various shapes and sizes than Harold could remember in all his previous life.

The mistress of all these splendors rose from her chair and gave him her slim white hand with infinite condescension, glancing at the same time at his boots, which in truth looked hardly fit for contact with that blossomy carpet.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Turrell," she said, "and I hope you bring me good accounts of my son's progress. Do you find him an industrious pupil?"

"Very fairly industrious, seeing he only works for his own amusement. I dare say if he had to get his *living by* music he might do something."

"*I should think* love of art ought to be a more

powerful inducement than mere considerations of money," said Mrs. Lynton, who prided herself on being able to talk to every one in their own style as a woman of tact should.

"I don't know," said Harold. "If you find your old coat out at elbows and your purse with nothing heavier about it than the tassels, it is a particularly strong inducement, though, no doubt, madam, one you are hardly fitted to appreciate. No, I am afraid we must say of your son as Poussin said of his pupil, 'Il vous manque un peu de pauvreté.'"

"Well, I hope you may be able to improve him a little, though you do not seem hopeful," said the lady, who was much disposed to laugh at the queer accent of his French.

"I have told him already I don't think I can teach him much. He knows almost as much of the teachable parts of music as I do."

"George has had great advantages," said his mother, "and he has a mind of no common order. I admire your frankness, though, Mr. Turrell. It is not every teacher who would speak in such terms of his pupil. Though you may convince me, you will scarcely make him believe in his own powers; so I think you must make up your mind to go on with the lessons even if you think him beyond tuition."

"I never quarrel with my bread-and-butter," said Harold.

"And you know you may be able to assist him in his compositions; he is very impatient of mere mechanical labor."

"So am I," said the young man, drily. "But I am sorry if you encourage him to compose, madam," he added. "It is a mistake."

"Why so, pray?"

"He has no ideas. As an interpreter, he shows great feeling for music; he is the fine-strung, sympathetic,

almost feminine, nature which picks up and assimilates the thoughts of others, but does not originate."

"Really!" said Mrs. Lynton, in a sarcastic tone. "You speak with great assurance, Mr. Turrell; you seem to know a great many things about my son which I am ignorant of."

"As regards this particular matter very likely I do," replied the incorrigible Harold.

At this moment George, who had left the two alone, thinking they would get on better so, fortunately entered the room. He saw at a glance that his plan had not succeeded very well: Harold was looking sheepish, and thinking, perhaps, he had been a little hard on his hostess; and there was as near an approach to an angry flush on Mrs. Lynton's face as that lady's languid circulation permitted.

"I think worse of your friend than ever," she said, as soon as she and her son were alone. "He is not even true to you, and did nothing but malign you behind your back to your own mother."

"Did he call me a thief and a pickpocket?"

"He said you had no ideas, and were only fit to play other people's music, including his own, I presume."

"He has often told me that to my face," said George, sadly, "and I am afraid it is true enough." But all the same he was a little hurt that Harold should have spoken so to his mother.

"She is a mean, cold-hearted woman," said Harold to himself, as he spurred his horse through the fog. "She cares for her son as a tigress cares for her whelp, but the woes of the whole world would have no power to move her. The thing does not exist which she would not slay if she had a fancy to suck its blood. I could see greed and cruelty in her eyes after the first dazzle had gone off. Her hand is white and taper, but I would not willingly take it in my own again. How is it women get so hard when the first bloom of youth is brushed off? Will Pamela Burnet change like that? I wonder?

Will her changeful aspect and voice settle down into that cold monotony? Her sister Anne is half way to it already; but then, she was never like Pamela, and I am quite forgetting my dear little Lady Abbess!"

CHAPTER X.

"So to his steed he gott and gan to ride
As one unfit therefore, that all might see
He had not trayned been in chevalree.
Which well that valiaunt courser did discerne,
For he despised to tread in dew degree;
But chaufed and foamed with corage fiers and sterne,
And to be eased of that base burden still did erne."

AS Harold rode on he consoled himself with remembering that Pamela and her sisters were again coming to take tea at the Abbey that afternoon. They had become frequent visitors lately, and their father (having been once forced into breaking the ice) generally accompanied them. Mrs. Burnet did not approve of these dissipations, and always refused the invitations for herself; however, she allowed the girls to go, much to their surprise, for she was glad of any distraction which could be shared by her son, whose spirits appeared to be sinking lower and lower as the time of his nephew's visit approached.

This visit, first talked of in the summer, had been again and again postponed by "sudden pressure of business," as John Burnet the elder wrote; but at last a letter had come from Johnnie himself saying he was started on his journey, and should be at Merehampstead by the first of December. He had been settling some affairs for his father in London, and dated his letter from Mrs. Long's house.

It was a very affectionate epistle, full of admiration for his "dear Aunt Carry," and, on the other hand, of anticipations of meeting his cousins, who, from all that

he had heard of them, were, he was sure, equally charming. Mrs. Burnet skipped this passage in reading the letter to her granddaughters, not wishing, as she said, to put "notions" into their heads; but she read out with emphasis the part in which he expressed how much pleasure and profit he expected to derive from the society of his uncle, whose studious tastes he admired and shared, and from that of his grandmother, of whom his father always spoke with the greatest admiration and veneration. The old lady's opinion of him underwent a change after the receipt of this letter.

"He really expresses himself uncommonly well," she said. "I am glad to find John has not neglected the education of his children. And now, girls, I will have no more gadding about. As you have promised to go to the Abbey to-morrow, I'll not make you take back your word; but after that, mind, you'll just stay at home and help me. I never shirk my share of work, but I don't choose to be trotted off my legs to amuse the young folks either."

The girls had looked forward eagerly to this last holiday; but, as is often the case with such much-thought-of occasions, it did not fulfill their expectations. To begin with, Mrs. Burnet for once went with them instead of their father, who seemed to have succumbed altogether now that the enemy was almost at his gates. Then George, who had very frequently joined these little parties, was to-day rather out of sorts with Harold, and chose to absent himself. Joe was gloomy and sullen, and did nothing but persecute Anne with all sorts of questions about her cousin's journey, as if she were better informed on the subject than the rest of the family. "Which coach would he come by? Would he rest a night on the way, or not? Why did he come in the coach at all? Most likely, though, he wouldn't be able to ride;"—and so on.

"I am sure he can ride," said Anne, who was a little offended, "for he had asked us to send Dobbin to the

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Dragon for him, though now we have told him we have a chaise, in case he likes to drive."

"Ha, ha!" laughed Joe. "He'll be pretty safe on Dobbin, any way. At least, I should think he might be able to jog along the road for half a mile without tumbling off."

"It is fully a mile," said Anne, severely; and then she resolutely turned away and began talking to Mrs. Turrell, while Joe sat looking grimly at the carving-knife, thinking how rude he had been.

As for poor Mrs. Turrell, she was evidently quite crushed under the weight of Mrs. Burnet's presence and advice, and looked helplessly every now and then to Mrs. Campeny for protection; but Mrs. Campeny herself, strange to say, was silent and abstracted, and it was some time before she took up the cudgels.

Mrs. Burnet began by hoping that Mrs. Turrell always washed up those cups and saucers herself; "servant-girls are so fond of using very hot water, and that, as every one knows, is ruination to good china." It was no use trying to mollify her with offers of raspberry jam—that expedient merely diverted the stream of criticism into a new channel.

"If I were you I would just tumble it all back into the pot and give it another boil, or you'll not find it will keep," she said. "Raspberry jam hasn't got any right to be as loose as this."

"I dare say you are quite right; and I know what a clever housekeeper you are," said Mrs. Turrell, timidly. "I was always such a bad one; but Mrs. Campeny kindly looks after the jams and things for me, you know."

"I should be very sorry to have any one looking after my household affairs," with a toss of the head. "I don't know what a woman is good for if she can't keep her own house."

"Oh, don't you?" said Mrs. Campeny, suddenly *sparkling up* and smiling. "I do—lots of things."

"I don't understand you, ma'am. I was always taught to think of my duty before everything, and Heaven knows I've done my best to bring up my children in the same way, and my grandchildren too; and if seeing after one's house isn't a duty, I should like to know what is."

"Ah, but don't you think there are others—being clever, for instance, or witty, or wise? I am quite sure looking pretty will be Emilia's vocation, won't it, dear? And now let me give you another cup of tea."

"I don't like those things said before the children, Mrs. Campeny, and I hope Emilia has sense enough to know that her face is a matter of very small consequence. Ah, she will care little enough for her looks by the time she comes to be as old as I am."

Emilia smiled and showed her nice little even teeth, and wished she could make out what "vocation" meant; but she knew Mrs. Campeny had paid her a compliment by the frown on her grandmother's brow.

After tea Mr. Quicke came in and enlivened them a little. He brought an old leather-covered volume of Chaucer for Pamela, to whom he often lent books. She sat down on a low stool near the candles to examine her treasure. Running through it hastily, she found a leaf here and there doubled across, and with her instinctive tenderness for books, she began carefully to open them out.

"Stop, child," said Mr. Quicke, "you must be very careful of that book, mind. My mother gave it to me, and I can't have a spot or a speck in it."

"I'll be very particular," said Pamela.

"And above all, about the inside. If you find any leaves doubled up, just leave them as they are. I never allow that sort of thing to be altered."

"Why?" said Pamela, looking up at him with first a laugh, and then a little blush. And then she began quietly refolding the pages she had opened out.

This was the only manner in which Mr. Quicke ever

intimated to her that he wished her to skip certain portions of the books he lent her. He was very particular about this; and if the sense required that she should read some part of the concealed leaf, he would copy as much of the passage as he thought necessary and insert it at the place. Pamela liked her old friend all the better for these fastidious precautions, and when she had finished the book she invariably took out the scraps of paper and kept them, partly to remind her of the book when it was gone from her, and partly because she could never make up her mind to throw away these little mementoes of the old man's care for her.

They were none of them very sorry when it was time to break up the party. Harold, perhaps, was more so than any of the others, for he had spent a fairly pleasant evening, lying on his back on an old couch in a corner of the room, watching the flicker of the fire. He yawned and gathered himself slowly together when Mrs. Turrell roused him to say good-bye to the Burnets.

"It is so jolly," he said, "to lie and look at the firelight, and think of the summer weather."

Joe tried to find an opportunity to make his peace with Anne; but though she was acute enough to go to him to be helped on with her cloak, so as to give him a chance, he failed to take advantage of it, being seized with a panic of shyness just at the critical moment, the consequence of which was, that he went to bed in a dismal and remorseful frame of mind, telling himself he had cut his own throat now with a vengeance; while Anne wondered what could have made him so cross and disagreeable, and why he should have flung her cloak round her shoulders, and then turned on his heel as if he wanted no more of her.

About ten days after this ill-starred party the Merehampstead coach rattled along the frosty road, bringing *the long-looked-for* stranger to Rose Hall. He had *managed* to secure the box-seat, and as he traveled had

been storing his mind with such scraps of information as the coachman could give him on farming subjects. He was a long-limbed, light-haired young man, so unlike in form and feature to his broad-shouldered, straight-backed father and grandfather, that Dickens the coachman stared with astonishment when he heard him announce himself as Mr. John Burnet, junior.

"Be *yew* the squire's nephew?" asked the old man, with a touch of contempt in his voice.

"I am," replied Johnnie, very graciously, for it was an agreeable surprise to him to hear the title applied to his uncle as a matter of course. Brought up among the rich, *parvenu* trading society of Manchester, there was something very soothing to the young man's pride in the prospective possession of this bit of landed property. It gave him a consequence which nothing in his character was likely to inspire, and a footing above men who were richer and better educated than himself. Mrs. Burnet, who still privately cherished the idea that when John was brought face to face with the relations he was to despoil he would relent, and consent at any rate to share the estate with his cousins, little knew that the Rose Hall property had become to him as the apple of his eye, and that neither gold, honor, nor affection would have power to extort from his grasp one inch of its coveted soil.

"I'm going down to be introduced to my cousins," he explained to Dickens, "and to have a look over the property. I'm the squire's heir, you know. Very unlucky for him that he never had a son, wasn't it? But it is an ill wind that blows nobody good—eh?"

Dickens felt strongly inclined to stop the youth's giggling by knocking him off the box. He had heard the story of the entail before, but had never been sure of the truth of it; and he had a soft place in his old heart for the three bright-faced girls, whom he had lifted up and down from his coach many a time when *they were little things*, and who had always a smile and

a kind word for him. However, he restrained himself and after touching up his team to a smart pace, sat looking obstinately over his leaders' heads and whistling.

They bowled easily along, for the road was hardened by a sharp frost; overhead was a heavy white sky portending snow; the bitter east wind came cutting across from seawards, rippling the surface of the river, which ran for a short distance by the roadside, and making the little, pallid, shivering willows shake their rough heads despairingly.

"It's a nice property, trewly," drawled out Dickens after a time; "but I'm thinking it won't suit the likes of yew."

"And pray why not?"

"It du blow uncommon sharp across them marshes in spring-time; it wants a good chest to stand it. A wind like that would just blow threw and threw a delicate young thing like you."

"Oh, if that is all, I'm not afraid, my good fellow; I'm stronger than I look." But as he spoke Johnnie gave a nervous, hollow cough which he vainly tried to stifle.

"Ah!" said Dickens, shaking his head solemnly, "if I were you I'd keep clear o' the east coast. Maybe you have got a brother?" he asked presently.

"Oh, hang it!" said Johnnie, who had become quite pale. "Are we never going to get to Merehampstead and out of this confounded cold?"

In fact, Dickens had hit the right nail on the head with most singular precision. John Burnet was not strong, and he had a sickly, consumptive mother, who by dint of continual coddling had made her son almost as great a hypochondriac as herself. There was no more conversation between the two till the coach drew up in front of the Dragon, when John said "Good-bye" very sullenly, and Dickens touched his hat with a scarcely-concealed grin.

Poor Dobbin had not a good time of it during that

short drive home. He was accustomed to very gentle treatment at the hands of his young mistresses, and at first the repeated cuts of the whip conveyed to his mind no impression but of a profound bewilderment; but at last a more than usually severe crack on his fat little hind-quarters roused his temper beyond endurance. He stood still, took a second to concentrate his energies, and then flung up his two heels with a will against the front of the chaise, and before the driver had time to collect his frightened wits was off like the wind.

John sat well back on the seat and pulled madly at the reins, but the more he pulled the faster Dobbin went: so he presently left off and remained clutching at the sides of the chaise trying to screw up his courage to throw himself out, an office which Dobbin was very near performing for him, for he so suddenly twirled in at a corner that if John had not been holding on for very life he must certainly have been jolted out. At that moment, however, his perils were over. Dobbin, considering he had given him enough for once, and well pleased to find himself at home, moderated his pace and trotted quietly up to the door. He shook his head knowingly as he drew up at the foot of the steps and composed himself into his usual placid attitude, as if he were the best behaved pony in the world, though he did look a little hot—an unnecessary piece of deception; for though all the family were assembled in the doorway, every one's attention was reserved for the new-comer.

CHAPTER XI.

"Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks, and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity."

JOHN BURNET had certainly no cause to be dissatisfied with his welcome. His uncle was courteous if not enthusiastic; and the girls, who had seen so few of their relations, but who, like most young people, had much of the spirit of clanship, were inclined to make a pet of him if he did not show himself very unworthy. As for Mrs. Burnet, she had her point to gain, and was extremely affectionate and attentive. Indeed, the girls were quite astonished to see how amiable and submissive their grandmother became before this limp-fingered, flaxen-haired young gentleman; how she made him cakes, knitted him comforters, and let him have a fire in his bedroom, a luxury which they were never allowed, even in the severest weather.

John soon found out that she had plans of her own hidden behind this show of affection, and the reflection added considerably to his enjoyment of the cakes and comforters. It seemed the good things of his inheritance were coming to him sooner than he expected, and that he was already become a person of consequence. One thing alone troubled him. He knew before he left Manchester that his cousins would be nearly penniless when their father died; and though he had no intention of giving up any portion of the estate for their benefit he had quite made up his mind that he would have to *help them* in some way unless, as he devoutly hoped,

they should marry in the mean time. He was very anxious to find out how this unpleasant obligation could be got over at the smallest possible expense to himself; that is to say, how little above mere bread and cheese he could offer to his uncle's daughters. He had hoped he should find the Rose Hall establishment conducted on a very humble scale, and the girls well accustomed to regard poverty as a guest who must surely arrive some day.

But Mrs. Burnet had always been in possession of an adequate income, and, though a thrifty woman, was fairly liberal in her arrangements. As for her granddaughters, she had made up her mind that the entail would sooner or later be set aside, and she and they would be comfortably provided for. "John was always a good son," she reflected, "and fond of his brother; besides, he is a rich man, and can provide for his own." Her judgment of her son had not been incorrect, but unfortunately she had quite forgotten that important element in the affair—John the younger. John interposed himself between her and his father like a wall. She had only touched the obstacle with the tip of her finger yet, and had not found out of what adamant it was built.

Another point on which John had made up his mind before leaving home was, that if his cousins proved nice young women he would marry one of them. "There will be less difficulty about the property," he thought, "and I shall have to provide for them all, any way." The sight of three pretty girls on the day of his arrival confirmed him in this view of the case, and he watched them that evening calmly and critically, point by point, making up his mind (astute sultan that he was) not to throw the slipper in a hurry, and warning himself not to be bewitched by Pamela's mirth or overawed by Anne's fine figure, and even fortifying himself against Emilia's dimpling, school-girl prettiness.

Pamela's chance, however, came to an untimely end *the next morning.* They were all sitting at breakfast,

and poor Richard Burnet was trying to answer patiently his nephew's string of questions about leases, and timber, and arable and pasture lands, and a great many other things which were no business of his at that time, at any rate, when Peggy the housemaid came in and announced:

"Please, sir, David says the chaise be broke in the front. Will you please to come and look at't after breakfast?"

"And who broke it, I should like to know?" demanded Mrs. Burnet.

"I am afraid it must have been done yesterday, though really I hardly think it could; but the pony kicked a little," said John, coloring up.

"Dobbin kick!" cried Pamela. "Dear little fellow! he never did such a thing in his life."

"Never before yesterday, perhaps," said John; "but then, I assure you, he kicked most viciously, and after that he tried to run away; but I kept a good tight hand on the little beast, and let him know who he had behind him, too!"

"I am afraid you were too severe with him," said Mr. Burnet. "The pony is quiet enough generally. My daughters drive him frequently, and have never had any accident."

"Oh, I had no accident, you know," said the young man in an off-hand tone. "If people only had presence of mind there wouldn't be many accidents."

"Or many chaises broken, I suppose," said Pamela.

"Hold your tongue, Pamela," said her grandmother.

"Well, he won't do it again in a hurry, I hope," said John. "I gave him the best drubbing he has had for a long time, I fancy."

Dark clouds of wrath had been rising in Pamela's eyes; at this she pushed back her chair and and got up.

"I remember," she said very quietly, "you looked quite pale when you arrived. I am sure you must have *had a great* fright. And now if you'll excuse me, *grandmother*, I'll go and look at poor Dobbin."

"You shall do no such thing," called out Mrs. Burnet; but the fugitive had already escaped. "Go and call her back, Anne. I'll not have this running about at meal times."

"Yes, grannie," said dutiful Anne, picking the crumbs off her dress and then making for the door in a very leisurely manner. But Pamela's light feet had already carried her to the stable, where her elder sister found her consoling Dobbin with an apple, with one arm thrown round his neck and her eyes full of tears, while David, who had been standing near the gate when the visitor made his rapid entrance, related a more truthful account of the affair than Johnnie had seen fit to give.

"I don't care if I was rude," said Pamela, in answer to her sister's not very hearty remonstrance. "He is a coward, and he has told lies, and he has cut poor little Dob all over the back most cruelly."

"But do come back to breakfast, there is a dear. Grannie will be cross, you know,—and it is so rude."

"As he is our guest, I suppose we must put up with him," said Pamela. So Dobbin having finished his apple, she permitted Anne to lead her in-doors again. She gave a ferocious look at her cousin from under her straight brows as she entered the room, and he, with the discretion which was certainly the better part of his valor, left her undisturbed, so that the remainder of the meal was peaceable, if not lively.

"She has done for herself," thought Johnnie. "I wouldn't have a wife with that sort of temper,—no, not for something."

But in spite of this unfortunate outbreak, the cousins became better friends as time went on. Even Johnnie Burnet had two sides to his character, and could not be always showing the unpleasant one. He could be very gallant and gentle in his manners, and had seen enough of the world to be able to astonish and amuse the girls with chatter about the very commonplace things which *he had done and* experienced in London and Paris, but

which were all new and wonderful to them. Pamela often confused him dreadfully in these stories by putting him through a rigorous cross-examination on points which seemed to her curious or obscure—a mode of procedure which he resented, as calculated to throw discredit on his assertions, while it really arose purely from her hungry imagination, which could never get food enough from his barren narrations.

It was Anne, however, whom be selected to be the recipient of his wittiest stories and most delicate attentions. He was always at hand to carry her cloak if she went out for a walk or to pick up her thimble if she dropped it; and though, to tell the truth, his jokes did not make her laugh as much as they did him, she was by no means insensible to these little material compliments which he paid so nattily. She began to think him quite as fine a gentleman as George Lynton, and not nearly so supercilious with it. Sometimes, perhaps, she compared him with Joe Turrell, and not altogether to the disadvantage of the latter. Joe was certainly rough and bearish in his appearance, but was he not on the whole more of a man? Indeed, the first quarrel Anne had with her cousin was about Joe, and arose from her taking up arms to defend her friend.

A short time after her nephew's arrival Mrs. Burnet considered it her duty to make some return for the Turrells' hospitality, and asked the whole party to a solemn tea-drinking. It was a stately and dismal affair, very different from the merry parties at the Abbey. Mrs. Turrell refused to expose her delicate throat to the evening air, and, she might have added, her weak mind to Mrs. Burnet's cudgeling. Mr. Quicke came, but escaped immediately after tea without making any sign; so of the visitors only Harold and Joe remained. The latter sat glaring at Johnnie, who was babbling on to Anne in a tone too low for the rest of the company to hear what he said, and looked as if he would gladly *made mince*meat of him if only the ladies were out of *the way.*

"You might as well talk a little louder," he said at last, "and give us poor yokels the benefit of all that."

"My dear sir," said Johnnie, "I am sure I should be delighted, but how could I expect to tell anything that will be news to you and Mr. Harold? My cousin is such an indulgent listener that to her I can talk freely. I was telling her about a beautiful picture I saw in Paris —an exquisite Madonna of Dolci's—of which she always reminds me. There is the same form of brow, the same white eyelids. If you know anything of Dolci's, I am sure it will not fail to strike you."

"I'm a farmer, sir," said Joe, sturdily, "and I know naught about such things. I'm for every man minding his own business, be it farming, or trade or what not. There's Harold can talk to you about fiddles and paintings and all the rest of it, if so be you're inclined, though I shouldn't have thought it was in your way much more than mine."

"I consider it part of the duty of every gentleman to cultivate his mind. Not that I am taking an offense at your allusion to my being in trade, Mr. Turrell. I am certainly in that position now, though such I trust is not to be my fate in the future. I hope to be a landed proprietor as was my grandfather before me; though I'm sure I hope it may be very long first," he added hastily, for Richard Burnet, who had been reading and apparently quite unconscious of the conversation, had suddenly aroused and was gravely inspecting his nephew over the top of his book.

"Your grandfather, John, was a very honest and respectable shopkeeper, and a man of sense and dignity," he said. "I hope when the time comes for you to inherit the fruit of his labors you may have profited by his example." With this solemn exhortation the master of the house returned to the study of his book, and said no more till supper time. Johnnie, though he went on talking *glibly*, was inwardly discomforted, and *as he hardly dared to* attack his uncle, determined to *wreak his vengeance* on Joe.

He boasted of his travels, and made a great display of his small scraps of information; he persisted in asking Joe's opinion on subjects of which he had never heard, elevating his eyebrows at the answers that unsophisticated young man made him. Richard knew well enough that his friend was being bullied, but was either too indolent or too much interested in his book to come to his assistance.

Mrs. Burnet was sitting bolt upright in her chair nodding, and Harold and Pamela were bending their heads over the same book at the other side of the table, so that there was no one to protect Joe but Anne, and she seemed unable to stir a finger in his defense, though her face was angry and flushed, and she had edged her chair quite away from her cousin's.

Joe rode home, feeling very miserable and almost angry with Harold for whistling as he went. That Anne should marry any one but himself seemed bad enough, but that she should link herself to this pretentious young fool was unbearable. "If she would only wait a bit—if she would only wait," was the burden of his sad reflections. Perhaps, if he could have seen Anne's good-night to her cousin he would have been a little comforted.

"Good-night, Johnnie," she said, yawning, and without looking at him.

"Is it really over?" he said, running officiously to snuff her candle. "Hasn't it been a delightful evening? Haven't you enjoyed it, dear Anne?"

"I should have enjoyed it much more if you hadn't kept quarreling with Mr. Joe. I don't like people to be rude to my friends."

"My lady fair is pleased to joke!" he cried, striking an attitude with the snuffers. "That heavy piece of humanity your friend, indeed!"

Anne walked off without saying another word, leaving him still in the act of flourishing the snuffers, but with such a comical expression of crossness on his face, that Pamela burst out laughing.

"Here are your sister's snuffers," he said, sulkily, as she passed him.

"Then you had better snuff yourself out with them," she answered, running up-stairs with a peal of laughter.

"I shan't allow Anne to talk in that style once we are married," he said to himself as he went off to bed; "and as for Mistress Pamela, I fancy her proud spirit will be brought down one of these fine days."

CHAPTER XII.

"Like April morning clouds that pass,
With varying shadow, o'er the grass,
And imitate, on field and furrow,
Life's chequered scene of joy and sorrow."

OF all this, however, Joe knew nothing. He only remembered that Anne had sat by the stranger all that evening and had listened to his stories with evident pleasure.

"He seems uncommonly clever," thought Joe. "I don't wonder she finds him more amusing than a great lout like me; but Lord, he'll never care for her as I should; he is too full of himself and his grand doings. As for me, I never need waste many thoughts on thinking of my manners and my old corduroy clothes; I could a' had it all to spare for her pretty ways, and her neat little dresses, and her bright face."

All night he was turning over these thoughts in his weary head, and in the morning, for the first time in his life, he rose feeling listless and without an appetite for his breakfast. It was a fine clear winter day; there had been no snow as yet, but a light hoar frost lay on the grass and sparkled on the dark points of the yew trees in the garden. Overhead arched a sky of soft, pure blue. Harold had thrown open the lattice-doors of his big window and was whistling cheerily over his work. Joe could hear him as he went out into the cold, still air, and felt no longer annoyed at his cousin's good spirits. The Abbey servants stared at their master, wondering *what had* made him so late, for he was generally up with

the sun. It was not so easy for his rough, red face to get very pale in the course of one sleepless night; yet there were traces of suffering about him which seemed out of proportion to such a cause. His was a perfectly organized and healthy frame, and the least jar ran through the whole of it like an electric shock, for the sensitiveness was in proportion to the healthiness, and a bad night, which would have scarcely upset Mrs. Turrell, was a cause of serious disturbance to stalwart Joe.

He walked off to the stables with his hands in his pockets, and tried to laugh cheerfully when Jones the groom exclaimed, "Why, Master Joe, you do look bad!" as he passed. Good, tender-hearted Joe! In the midst of his trouble his reward came to him. There was no living creature in the place—man, woman, child, or animal—who had not received some kindness from the hand of the master; and now, when for the first time he walked among them with his head bent down, they all flocked round to comfort him. Diamond, his beautiful gray hunter mare, put her head over her loose box and rubbed her nose confidingly on his sleeve; then came a whole troop of dogs, big and small, led on by a bull-terrier of awful countenance, and began to take turns at jumping up to get a lick at his hand; from above descended a flight of smooth-necked pigeons, who associated his presence with crumbs, and who fluttered round the stable door impatiently. Lastly, Jones's little daughter Totty came bounding along on her sturdy legs through the crowd of dogs, and tried to reach his pocket by getting on the very tips of her toes.

"You want sweeties, Totty? You must find 'em then."

"I tan't reach," said Totty. "Tome down lower."

"I couldn't. I've such a big bone in my leg."

"Then I sall pull you down," said Totty; and as she embraced one leg with her two fat arms, Joe bent his knees sufficiently to bring his pocket within reach of his *little friend.*

"Barley-suker—tick-jaw—dinger-bread," she whispered, chronicling her treasures as she dived again and again into the pocket.

"Don't you mean to thank me, you greedy little puss?"

Just as she held up a sticky mouth to be kissed Mrs. Campeny appeared, coming out of the back-door of the house. She had a beautiful frosted branch in her hand. It was as lovely and as symbolic as the sprig of white blossoms which the angels sometimes carry in the old pictures, for, indeed, it was as a beneficent messenger, a bearer of good tidings, that she came to Joe.

"Come and take a walk with me," she said. "It is too cold to stand still, and I've some good news for you, Mr. Joe, dear."

Up and down, up and down, they walked on the crumbling gravel path, till Harold, who was getting very hungry, looked out from his window and asked if they were to have any breakfast or not.

"Presently," said Mrs. Campeny, drawing her soft white shawl round her shoulders. This was the secret she had to tell. Joe and Harold had had an old bachelor uncle, Lloyd Turrell, who had died some two years before, leaving the whole of his property, which was considerable, to charities. He had been a flighty old man, very fond of his money and very touchy in his temper. Both Joe and his father had long been in his bad books, but as they had no desire to be his heirs this had given them small concern. Indeed, when his aunt was left a widow, Joe was very glad to think that old Lloyd's money would go to her and her children, and was almost as much disappointed as she was to find when he died, that, though he had made a will half a year before his death, leaving about a third of his income to her, at the very last he had revoked this by another, made two days before he died, in which he bequeathed everything he possessed to charities.

How Mr. Quicke had discovered some informality in

the execution of this latter document Mrs. Campeny could not very clearly explain. He had been on the track for a long time, but both he and she had thought it better not to tell Mrs. Turrell anything about it until all chance of disappointment was over.

"She will have about a hundred and fifty pounds a year and the furniture," said Mrs. Campeny, "not a handsome fortune nor what she ought to have had, but enough to make her very comfortable, living quietly."

"And so that is what you and old Quicke were always laying your heads together about, was it?" mused Joe. "But why should women be so fond of secrets? You might 'a told me and poor old Harold, I think."

"Your aunt wouldn't have been long finding out all about it, once either of you had known it," said she. "I'd as soon expect a cambric handkerchief to hold water as you or Mr. Harold a secret, my dear."

"And Mrs. Cam, do you think if it is only some confounded lawyer trick—turning the words inside out like —is it honest to take the money? I wouldn't have Aunt Mary's name, you know, mixed up with dirty dealings. Uncle Lloyd was an old beast, certainly; but, after all, a man may do what he likes with—"

"No, he mayn't," interrupted Mrs. Campeny, angrily, "not when he has got kith and kin of his own as would starve unless there were good kindly folks to look after 'em. And as for the hospitals, why, he was an old man who wouldn't throw a bone to a dog. He'd have had his money buried with him if he could 'a got it done. Let your aunt take what is her own and be thankful; and for goodness's sake, Mr. Joe, don't go putting such notions into Mr. Harold's head; you know how high, and mighty, and willful he is; and you may be sure Mr. Quicke wouldn't have stirred a peg in it if it hadn't been all right."

"I don't think he would," said Joe, thoughtfully; "I don't think he would."

"*Does Aunt Mary* know yet?" he asked, after a *pause.*

"No. And it is you must tell her, Mr. Joe."

"No, no, Mrs. Cam. She'll be very nervous and all that, poor thing; and I'm such a clumsy fellow. You'll do it nicely, a bit at a time, you know."

As Joe stuck to this view of the matter, Mrs. Campeny had to give in and promised to break the good news with all discretion after breakfast. Joe's face had lost all traces of sadness if not of fatigue by this time; he was looking radiant, and as the old housekeeper glanced up at him she thought how good and unselfish he was in his joy. There was a new expression in his face too; he looked more thoughtful, or, to use a better word, more spiritual than usual.

"Well, shall we go in to breakfast, my dear? I hear Mr. Harold roaring to poor Jenny for something to eat," said Mrs. Campeny, pausing on the door-step.

He bent down and took one of her little wrinkled hands in his and kissed it. The gesture was so unlike his usual rather rough manner that she was touched and surprised.

"What is it, my dear boy?" she said, patting his hand and unconsciously going back to the old days when he was a little motherless child trotting by her side about the house. "I'm an old woman now, and don't expect to have my hand kissed any more."

"I've got something to tell you," said Joe, with the words sticking in his throat, and then they recommenced their walk, and with agonies of shamefacedness, and much help and encouragement, he managed to get through the story of his love affair. The resolute little woman at his side did not need much explaining; she was to be really supplanted at last, that was clear enough to her. Perhaps that kiss on the hand made the pang all the keener. A flood of rebellious youth had been called up by it; would her soul ever be old enough to get on with white hair and wrinkles? If so, *that day* was not yet. Still she managed to have a *bright look* in her eyes, though there were tears there

too, to greet the young lover when he had finished his story.

"She is a sweet girl," she said, laying her hand on his arm, "like what your mother was when I first came here; and so cheerful and helpful in her ways. I am sure she will be kind to your old nurse, too, and will let her stay near you. I should like to nurse your son, Master Joe, dear, as I nursed you when you were a little red-fisted fellow." And then at last they went in to breakfast.

Mrs. Turrell was the most unobservant of people, and Harold was very short-sighted, and on this occasion very hungry, or they must both of them have remarked the distraction of their two companions. Indeed, as it was, Harold had a consciousness there was something unusual in the air, though he did not notice that Mrs. Campeny hid her face behind the urn and wiped her eyes every now and then, or that Joe ate an astonishing quantity of cold beef in evident unconsciousness of what he was about. Before breakfast was half over he called out to have Diamond saddled and brought round at once.

"I wouldn't go just yet," said Mrs. Campeny, gently, at which commonplace remark Joe dropped his knife and fork, and blushed up to the roots of his hair. The meal seemed a never-ending one, but it was got through at last, the table cleared, and the cups and saucers put away in their cupboard. Not till then did Mrs. Campeny allow Joe to mount Diamond, who had been pacing up and down the front path for half an hour, making the gravel fly from beneath her pretty silvery feet as she pawed the ground with an impatience almost equal to her master's.

It had never entered Joe's head to dress himself more smartly than usual to go love-making. He came down in his old corduroy breeches, and dusty blue coat with tarnished buttons, as if he had been starting for his every-day work on the farm; but he had ordered out his best

mount for the occasion, and had taken care to see that the mare's grooming was done to perfection, and that she had her handsome new bridle and headstall on. His courage, which had been inclined to fail at first, began to rise as soon as he was in the saddle and Diamond gave her first bound under him. Mrs. Campeny was standing at the door waving her handkerchief, and Harold up above was thumping some joyous march tune out of the keys of his old harpsichord.

Looking back he saw the gleam of the white handkerchief, and the winter sunshine enfolding the old gray house; the pigeons were skimming about its roof, and the casement windows flashed kindly glances at him from under the ivy. It was all gone in a moment, and he was riding away with a light heart and his face set towards Rose Hall.

CHAPTER XIII

"O but she will love him truly!
He shall have a cheerful home;
She will order all things duly,
When beneath his roof they come."

MRS. TURRELL was sitting in the parlor engaged in trimming a bonnet. She was by no means expert at it. Everything seemed to go wrong: her needle was too coarse and would not pass through the buckram foundation, and when it did make a move, it went with a jerk and ran into her finger; the bows could not be persuaded to bend themselves into graceful shapes, and the lace was limp and would fall the wrong way. Altogether she had worked herself into a state of nervous agitation by the time Mrs. Campeny came to tell her the important news.

"It is of no use," she said; "I never was clever with my hands as some folks are, and I do so hate doing anything with feathers, they always curl the wrong way. I declare I've half a mind to leave them out and only put a bow; it would be quieter like, wouldn't it, Mrs. Campeny?"

"If I were you, I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd just pack it all up in the box and send it off to Mrs. Stokes to finish. She'll make the feathers curl the right way, I dare say."

"Oh, I can't do that; she does ask such dreadful prices. I'd quite settled to make up this myself, but really I don't think it ever *will* be fit to be seen, and I'm *so tired of it," sighed* poor Mrs. Turrell. "I'm sure I'd *be glad to send it if* I could afford it."

"Come, now, I'm sure you can afford it very well," was the answer, and thereupon Mrs. Campeny sat down and unfolded her budget of news.

The poor woman was much excited, and a little incredulous at hearing of her good fortune. She passed through several varying states of mind very rapidly. She did not think it would come to anything, she had no confidence in lawyers—no, not even in Mr. Quicke; he was very flighty and queer in his ways; besides, if he really believed his own story, why had he not told her? As for fearing to disappoint her, that was nonsense at her age, when she had learned never to expect anything till she got it. Then she passed to the thankful and pious stage, and said surely this was the reward of her patience under many sufferings, and now she and her children would no longer be a burden on poor dearest Joe. And from this she subsided into tears and incoherence; and pressed Mrs. Campeny's hands with many assurances of her undying regard and gratitude for her old friend.

Mrs. Campeny wisely withheld any mention of Joe's errand; she packed up the unfinished bonnet and despatched it to Mrs. Stokes to be set to rights, and then, when she had prepared a nice little glass of egg-flip, which had a wonderful effect in calming the fluttered spirits of her companion, she had nothing to do while Mrs. Turrell was closeted up-stairs with her son, but to sit down and speculate on what fortune was attending Joe, and to listen for the quick clatter of Diamond's returning hoofs.

Mr. Johnnie Burnet was the first person who saw Joe Turrell arrive at Rose Hall. He always found the two hours after breakfast the most wearisome part of the day. When his uncle had retired to his study, Mrs. Burnet had gone to order the dinner, and his cousins had betaken themselves to their domestic duties, he had *no one left* to amuse him if he were gay, or to laugh *him into* good humor if he were sulky.

On this particular morning he had got up with a cold and headache, and was feeling more cross than was usual with him even at that hour. Up-stairs he could hear the shaking of feather-beds going on, the occasional flap of a duster, and the merry chatter of the girls.

"There is nothing like shaking a bed after breakfast to make the lungs strong," said Mrs. Burnet; so Anne and Pamela were always expected to make their own; while Emilia, who would much rather have been engaged in these domestic occupations, was spelling over her lessons in her father's study, being too short at present to make a sufficiently vigorous shaker.

John looked at his enemy of last night, as he rode up, with no friendly eyes. He was lounging listlessly on the window-seat with a book he did not care to read in his hand, feeling very chilly and miserable. Joe sat his horse with evident ease and enjoyment, his face was red and jolly, and his breath went curling up in great puffs in the crisp air as he drew rein at the door and asked for the squire. "He'll be some fun to tease, any way," thought Johnnie, creeping back to the fire; and he was rather disappointed when he heard the visitor's steps pass the door and go on towards the study.

Pamela from above had seen him too, and nodded him good morning from the open window. "I hope there is nothing the matter," she said, "he looked rather strange."

Joe had his own ideas about wooing. It had never entered his head to go first to Anne and make her an offer; indeed, had he been obliged to adopt such a course he would have been dreadfully puzzled how to set about it. He merely walked into Mr. Burnet's study, as he had done many times before on matters of business, and while his lady-love was busy making her beds up-stairs, he, not without some shyness, but in calm *and sensible language,* informed her father how matters

stood with him—how much his farm produced, how much he could lay by year by year, what provision he could make for his wife, and for children if he had them, in the case of his death.

"What a time he is shut in there with father," said Pamela, at last.

Just then Emilia came running up-stairs to say Anne was to go down to the study. "They've been in there half an hour," she added, "and I had to go away, you know, and there wasn't any time for my English history."

Pamela was leaning against the bedpost with her arms thrown round it and her head bent down. What was it that had so suddenly enlightened her? Anne had blushed a little when the message came to her, as she hastily untied the strings of her brown holland apron. The discarded garment lay on the floor at Pamela's feet. Had she thrown off her old life with it, and gone away into some new world at a call as strange and sudden as the voice of death? Pamela's mind ran back over all her sister's life, lived side by side with her own. They had been children together, and girls, and young women. Here, then, came a sudden turn in the road: Anne had gone away without a single backward look, and she would never come back—no, never come back the same. There was no room for either joy or sorrow in the turmoil of the girl's heart; she was as one who had gone out to seek for the sea, and before even the sound of the waves has reached her, one of her companions is carried off by the great mysterious tide. She had longed for life, and here behold its surges already at her feet, and Anne embarked on who could say what a voyage? with no warning, no farewell.

"Why, Pamela,—you are crying!" said Emilia. "Anne has not been naughty, has she?"

"Don't talk nonsense," said Pamela, raising her head. "Come, you may as well help me to put the room tidy *since Anne is gone.*" And then she lifted the apron

from the floor, folded it carefully, and put it away, and went about Anne's little duties tenderly and sadly, as we fill the places of those who are lost or gone away.

The conclave in the study showed no signs of breaking up. It had been joined by Mrs. Burnet, and her presence had not conduced to the harmony of the meeting. She did not approve of early marriages; she thought it would have been more becoming if Mr. Turrell had spoken about the matter to Anne's only female relation instead of going to her father; lastly, if her granddaughter were to marry at all, she might do better. This was added with a very significant air.

Joe had become extremely red and angry; Richard Burnet sat supporting his head on his hands looking ready to sink under the weight of his difficulties; and Anne, whose courage had quite given way, was dissolved in tears.

"You are both hardly past your school-days," said Mrs. Burnet. "We must hear no more of this for a year or two, Mr. Joe; and then, perhaps, if your prospects are good her father and I will reconsider the matter. My son quite agrees with me."

"But you've given me your promise, sir," begged Joe.

"I've given you my own consent, but I can't give you my mother's," he groaned.

"Nothing shall induce me to sacrifice my granddaughter's prospects," said Mrs. Burnet, more and more offended.

"If Anne consents, and the squire consents, I ought to be satisfied," said Joe, quite worried out of his politeness at last. "I only hope, madam, you'll learn to think otherwise about it some day, for I shouldn't like not to be friendly and hearty with my wife's folks: and now I'll say good-bye, for I dare say you and the squire may like to talk it over in private, and he knows all I can tell him about my affairs."

With this he stepped across the room to Anne's corner, and putting his hand under her round chin, quietly

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much he could lay by year by year, what provision
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kissed her. Mrs. Burnet witnessed this audacious proceeding in horrified silence. She had always thought Joe a well-conducted, meek young man. If one of her own fat sheep had turned upon her she could not have been more astonished. Under cover of this *grand coup* both the delinquents had taken themselves off, and she found herself left to fight the battle with her son, robbed already of half her energies.

The great cause of her objection was that she had settled it in her own mind that Anne should marry her cousin. Richard's daughter should after all be the mistress of Rose Hall, she thought; and once married to Anne, John Burnet, who, as she had discovered, would be ready to give up not a jot of what was his own, could scarcely turn his back on his wife's family. In this arrangement Mrs. Burnet thought she saw a provision for Pamela and Emilia, and for herself if she survived her son.

Richard listened to her exposition of her plans with less patience than usual. "I can hear no more of this, mother," he said, at last. "I entirely disapprove of the marriage of cousins; and even if John were not a blood relation I should be sorry to see my girl united to him. I think very badly of the young man. I am sure I hope I am not in any way prejudiced against him; I believe I am not so. He seems to me to be wanting in generosity, and even in honor; besides, I will not force my daughter's inclinations. She has set her affection upon an honest and well-to-do young man, and I have given my consent. I don't see that there is any more to be said about it."

Mrs. Burnet at last retired to her own room, worsted for once. She sat down and wept some very bitter tears in her solitude. "I don't know why women want children," she said to herself. "When they are little and helpless they cling to us and are dutiful, and then they grow up and turn against the mother who bore *them.*" She spoke a few words to her granddaughter

that afternoon, which expressed her tacit, though unwilling consent to the match. "I can only hope it may turn out better than I expect," she said, "and that your children, if you have any, may be comforts to you. It's more than mine have been, I'm sure. If you had my experience perhaps you wouldn't be in such a hurry to run into the troubles of life at your age."

"Dear grannie! how good you are," said Anne, gratefully; for to get her grandmother's countenance, on any terms, seemed much to her; and then they embraced one another very affectionately.

"And now run and put on your bonnet," said the old lady, "and take a walk. Your eyes are quite red, and you ate hardly a mouthful of dinner."

"I'm afraid Cousin Johnnie wants us though."

"Well, never mind your cousin for once. I'll tell him I sent you to Merehampstead, and Pamela can go with you."

The morning sunshine had passed away when the sisters started on their walk. It was a clear, cheerful afternoon, though the sky was gray and there was no longer the keenness of frost in the air. They had reached the top of a slightly sloping field when Pamela paused on the step of a stile. Away to the left a little smoke went curling above the trees, and a gray corner of the Abbey walls peeped out among the brown branches. "How strange it will be," she said, musing, "to get up in the morning and think, 'Anne is not here, she is away at the Abbey.' And you will come to see us, and we shall ask you to come up and take your things off in your own old room, just like a visitor."

"I suppose I shall get to feel it home-like there, too, sometime," answered Anne; "but I do wish it wasn't such a curious house."

"Oh, Anne! I think it is such a lovely old place; but any way it ought to be better than any other house *in the world to you.*"

"It is very pretty; but I shouldn't call it as comfortable as our house: but of course he likes it just as I like my own home. One must like the place one has been brought up in best, I suppose."

"I don't see that quite," said Pamela. "You might as well say you must love the people best you have known the longest; and at that rate, you know, you would love father and me better than your husband."

"I can't say about better and worse. I can't love anybody all of a sudden just the same as my sister who has known all about me all my life long: it is not in my nature."

"Anne," cried Pamela, seizing her hand, "don't marry him if you don't love him better than any one in the whole world."

"I do love him," said Anne, firmly, but with a heightened color; "I think him more manly and generous and good than any one I ever knew. I shall do all he wishes me when we are married without asking a question, because I can trust him thoroughly. Isn't that loving him?"

"Yes, yes; I think so," said Pamela; "but tell me, if you couldn't ever be married would you be very unhappy; would you be content just to love him all your life?"

"Of course, I always liked him," replied Anne, "before I had any idea of being married; but it stands to reason, I couldn't like him in the same way if he wasn't going to be my husband."

"How can I make you understand me?" cried Pamela, wringing her hands. "Don't you know what falling in love is, and being ready to give up anything for one person, and to do wrong almost to serve him?"

"No, no," interrupted Anne, "that can't be right. But don't look so troubled, my little sister. I'm not like you, but I love him in my stupid old way, and it suits Joe, you know."

"*How foolish* I am," said the girl, drawing Anne's

hand into her muff; "you are quite right not to talk about it, dear; talking spoils things so, and surely I ought to know my own sister without explanations. If you will forgive me I won't be so silly again."

Anne granted the forgiveness very readily, being, in fact, much puzzled as to what it was about. They had reached the bottom of Merehampstead High Street by this time, and were ascending the hill towards the church. "Let us go and hear if there is any music," said Pamela. "This is Saturday afternoon: perhaps Mr. Quicke will be playing." Her expectations were not disappointed. As they approached the door the soft, full notes of the organ came floating outwards. Pamela ran round to the little belfry entrance which she had discovered in the summer, and found her way into the dim, deserted nave. Anne had followed her timidly, and now they both sat down on a low seat near the font. Mr. Quicke was not the musician this time. A hand less firm than his played the first chords of a stately old German choral, and then a clear, sweet voice pierced through the music, singing a Latin hymn, as full-toned and solemn as the tune. After the excitement and turmoil of the day, Pamela's soul seemed sinking down into most blessed depths of peace. The twilight glimmered in through the great colored windows, the pulpit and reading-desk were shrouded in dusty covers, as if the time of prayer and exhortation were over, and the time of rest and thanksgiving had come. The carved angels round the font bore the stone basin on their heads without effort or weariness; straight down to their feet fell their unbroken folds of drapery.: the knight asleep on his tomb with face turned slightly away from the window was not more at rest than they; and still the hymn went on rising and falling as if it, too, had learned the secret of perfect peace. Anne was also touched and subdued; she sat with quiet hands folded on her lap, and thought over *her thanksgiving for* life and what sweetness life had

brought her, silently. For Pamela, such calm seemed always fated to end suddenly. In this case a touch did it, the touch of a warm hand upon her own cold one, and a voice close by, which seemed to have summed up the whole of ecstasy into these brief words, "Are *you* here?"

It was Harold Turrell who had come upon her in the dusk, and who sent the blood surging about her heart that had but lately shared such still companionship. Things seemed to have got back almost to their usual commonplace state by the time they all got outside into the daylight. George Lynton came down from the organ-loft and set every one on a comfortable footing at once. "I wish I could walk home with you," he said, as the groom came forward with his pony. "I am so greedy of compliments, you see, Miss Pamela; and for two young ladies to come and hear my performance is something quite out of the common."

"That is only because you don't give notice beforehand," said Pamela. "Be sure you tell us next time." And then he rode off on his smart little nag, and Harold and the two sisters started on their homeward walk. They were all very silent. Harold walked by Pamela's side and glanced up at her frequently. Her presence inspired him with a wonderful mental activity; all that was dull and coarse in him seemed charmed away by the touch of her hand; they went side by side across the darkened marshes, and she seemed to be silently writing on his heart, showing him himself, and herself, and all the hidden things of life. For the good fortune that had befallen his mother that day he was less thankful than he should have been. His own dependence was as much as ever a fact; it was merely shifted from Joe's shoulders to his mother's. The news of his cousin's engagement was much more soul-stirring. That Joe could fall in love gave him quite a new value *in Harold's* eyes; and the patient generosity with *which he had* waited till he could marry without cast-

ing off those he had undertaken to protect, seemed the act of a nature perfectly good and true. Harold's faith was unlimited, and so was his suspicion when once it was roused. In his world the devils were all most unmistakably black, and the angels of the most dazzling whiteness; while intermediate beings there were none, only degrees of brilliance, counting downwards from Pamela Burnet. It always gave him extreme satisfaction to see people carrying out their characters properly. He was delighted when he found Joe doing nobly under difficult circumstances, and, it must be owned, was almost as much pleased when he found a liar telling a lie, or a coward with his heels to the foe.

The next morning Johnnie Burnet came down to breakfast in much better health and temper. No one had told him of Anne's engagement yet; and though he knew there was something more important than usual going on, he never thought of attributing it to the right cause, which was not unnatural, seeing that he had accustomed himself to regard Anne as his own particular property. He found Emilia alone in the breakfast-parlor, sitting on a stool on the hearth-rug, staring at the fire, with eyes and mouth very wide open.

"What's the matter, Emilia?" he said. "You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"Our Anne is going to be married," she answered, solemnly. "Only think! It was a secret yesterday. He came and asked father, you know; but I heard them talking away in bed and I listened: Pamela was so cross, but I don't see any harm when it's one's own sister and she is my sister just as much as Pamela's."

"What the deuce do you mean?" cried the young man, angrily. "I suppose Pamela has been telling you some confounded lies. Who do you mean by 'he'? For goodness's sake don't begin to cry; what a little fool you *are!*"

"It's not lies," said Emilia; "you are very rude,

Cousin Johnnie. Anne said grandmother said she wanted her to marry you. I'm very glad she isn't going to, I'm sure."

"I suppose it's that great lout of a Joe Turrell. And I'll tell you what, Emilia, if you think I wanted your sister you are very much mistaken, I can tell you."

"Please don't get so angry," pleaded poor Emilia; "it was Anne and Pamela."

"Pamela is an impudent baggage, then."

"Come, come, young man," said Mr. Burnet, from the door; "you must please to keep a civil tongue in your head as long as you stay here."

"It need not be long, sir," foamed Johnnie.

"Just as you like. Now go and call your sisters to breakfast, Emilia."

CHAPTER XIV.

"Flower o' the broom
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!"

JOHNNIE was, however, determined not to abandon the field without a single attempt to gain Anne's affections. He was really fond of her so far as he was capable of being fond of any one, and the idea of cutting out poor Joe was a very pleasant one. Two or three days had passed, and the accepted lover had not ventured near the house, when one afternoon John had the luck to find his cousin alone in the parlor, busy picking to pieces the skirt of an old dress. To comment upon Joe's remissness, seemed a good way of opening the conversation: so flinging himself into an arm-chair on the other side of the fire, he remarked with a smile, "You don't seem to grieve over the long absence of your sweetheart, Anne?"

"There isn't anything to grieve about, is there?" she said, pleasantly. "He has plenty of accounts to settle up, you know, at Christmas time; and I am sure we have been busy enough, too."

"I think if I had the happiness to stand in his place, I could manage to tear myself away from accounts and everything else."

"Ah, Cousin Johnnie! you have nothing to do but to make yourself polite and agreeable, and I am sure very nicely you do it; but you know we were not all born with silver spoons in our mouths."

"Still, I am afraid Mr. Joe is not sensible of his own *good fortune—hardly* understands what a treasure has

fallen to his lot," said Johnnie, with a very sentimental sigh.

Anne felt almost sure he had no right to talk to her in this way; but still the compliments were pleasant to her, and though she kept her eyes fixed demurely on her work, she could hardly be quite unconscious of the looks of admiration her cousin was casting upon her. She blushed and gave a little uneasy cough. Johnnie began to feel he was making great way.

"My dear Anne, tell me truly—are you really sure he is worthy of you? Do no doubts ever cross your mind? Have you ever plainly asked yourself the question?"

"No, certainly not," said Anne. "What is the good of asking one's self questions, pray?"

"How simple-minded and straightforward you are! And yet I beseech you to look at the matter in that way. Look at Mr. Turrell's character and at your own as if you were some third person, and judge if you and he are likely to be happy together—if your refinement and his coarseness are likely to harmonize—if you, with your clear, strong mind, will not soon tire of his clownish society. Do try to form a calm judgment on these points as you value your own happiness, and—and mine."

"It appears to me all that is like playing at hide-and-seek by one's self. You put a thing in a corner, and then go turning over all the tables and chairs to look for it, as if you didn't know where it was. I don't see much good in asking a lot of questions when you know the answers beforehand. I'm sorry you don't seem to approve of Joe, cousin; but, any way, as we are going to be married, perhaps you had better not say any more about it, to me at least." Anne was blushing now, but not with pleasure. Compliments to herself were all very well, but fault finding for Joe was quite another matter.

"*Ah, well!*" said John, sighing, "I had hoped things

might have been otherwise. I had hoped you might have made a different choice. I wish I had known you earlier, Anne!"

"I don't see that that would have made any difference," said Anne, suddenly wrenching apart a very dusty seam just under her cousin's nose, for he had edged his chair quite close to hers and was bending his head almost over her knee. "I beg your pardon," she said, as he sneezed; "this old gown is very dusty: you had better get a little farther off, I think."

He retired to the other end of the hearth-rug, and sat biting his nails. "Then I am to understand you mean to keep to your engagement," he asked, presently, in a sulky tone.

"What do you mean by talking to me in that way?" said Anne, standing up and gathering her work together. "Do you suppose I make a promise one week and take it back the next? Why do you come here and make all this talk about my happiness if you only want to make me uncomfortable, and to say unkind things about Joe, who never said a hard word of any one in his life?"

"I think you are throwing yourself away, and I tell you so, my dear girl; and I must say I thought you would have taken my advice in good part."

"Then, if you have any more to say on the subject, please go and talk to my father. It is not my place to hear Mr. Turrell found fault with," said Anne, as she marched haughtily out of the room, keeping down her tears with a most heroic effort till she reached her own bedroom.

"She can't say I made her an offer any way," reflected John, as he stood on the rug, grinding his teeth. And then he began to think it was about time for him to go back to Manchester.

There was great merriment that year at Mere Abbey over putting up the Christmas holly. Never was there an old house that lent itself so kindly to decoration. The heavy pillars in the hall and the high, carved man-

tel-pieces seemed as if they were just meant to wear graceful wreaths and bunches of greenery. Pamela presided over the arrangements and had Harold always at her beck to reach such places as were beyond her powers of climbing. Anne sat patiently on the floor at Mrs. Turrell's feet, stringing red berries and tying long streamers of holly. The two were great friends; but Mrs. Turrell's kindness had taken a tinge of sympathizing pity since she heard of Anne's engagement, and she generally spoke of her as "poor young thing," and shook her head sadly, but affectionately, when she looked at her. Marriage in her opinion was not only a solemn but a rather dismal thing, and ended in your being left a widow, badly off, and with a tribe of unruly sons. Harold was at the other end of the hall, leaning his head on the top of a high oak press, on which Pamela was sitting with a forest of green boughs about her.

"I think Christmas has brought some luck even to such a poor devil as I am," said Harold; "I believe I have got some one to take my overture."

"No!" cried Pamela, letting her hands fall in her lap, "didn't I tell you so? And how you have been moaning about it!"

"They gave me little enough for it; but I don't care for that as long as they get it decently performed and give it a chance."

"I wish you could play all the instruments at once, yourself," she said; "but as you can't, I hope they will just be content to play it quietly, and not try to make the sad pieces sadder by drawling, or the merry pieces merrier by jigging. I wonder why people always play like that. They don't do it when they read. I mean one only makes a little difference in the tone; one doesn't wipe one's eyes when the hero dies, or jump up in the air when the heroine is married; but in music people make it all so exaggerated."

"I suppose that is meant for me; I'm a deal too demonstrative for a calm lady like you."

"And how do you know I was thinking of you at all?"

"I tell you what, Pamela, I don't agree with all that fine reticence of yours. It is part of the affected foppery of modern life. If I'm angry I like to show I'm angry, and I don't see why I shouldn't. If I hate people, why should I pretend I don't? It hurts me and it doesn't deceive them. One can never feel sure of anybody. You let me stand here by you and lay my hand on a fold of your dress as if you had no dislike to my presence; but, for all that, I know you would snip away just as quietly at your work if you loathed the sight of me."

"Am I such an accomplished hypocrite?"

"You are not worse than other women. Perhaps you are a shade more truthful. I have certainly seen you vindicate your feelings towards your precious cousin in a creditable manner."

"Well, I don't much like my cousin," said Pamela, confidentially; "but I didn't mean to show it; relations ought to hang together, I think."

"Relations!" cried Harold, scornfully. "What relationship, pray, do you find between that creature's slow-blooded, colorless constitution and yours? You are a thousand times more nearly related to me than him. Look at his hand, with its heavy, nerveless fingers and moist skin, and at your own, which is dry and firm, and quivers with life. Mine is cast in a coarser mould, but there is some affinity between ours; his is as different as death from life."

"I should be sorry if there were much family likeness between us, certainly," said Pamela, laughing; "but there is no denying the fact that he is my father's nephew."

"I don't care a straw for those sort of facts," replied the young man. "You are putting the letter instead of the spirit; but it makes no difference to the real truth. *You can't escape from* your own type and grovel with *Johnnie Burnet.*"

"Do you know you are very rude?"

"You don't mind it, and you are not over civil yourself sometimes."

"Give me the hammer," she said. "Don't be afraid, I'm not going to use it as an offensive weapon;" and then she got on her knees and began nailing some little bunches of green round a niche where once a figure had stood in the old ecclesiastical days.

Just then George Lynton's pony flashed past the window, and before Pamela had finished her work the young gentleman was in the room, and both he and Harold were waiting to help her down from her perch. Then he had his congratulations to pay, and there was quite an amusing little scene between him and Anne. "It is not you whom I must so much congratulate," he said, "as my friend Joe, but I hope I may be allowed to wish joy to the bride with full honors;" and shaking back his bright curls he gave her a gallant little salute on the cheek. Anne never considered him as anything but a boy; she would have given him a kiss without thinking twice about it, and she thought all this fuss very absurd; but Pamela was rather shocked at her sister's boldness.

Afterwards they all gathered round Harold's harpsichord, which had been brought down-stairs now the weather was cold, and sang carols. First Harold trolled out some merry ditty about the holly and the ivy, in the chorus of which the girls joined timidly, then George sat down and sang in his sweet clear tenor—

"God bless the master of this house,
The mistress also,
And all the little children
That round the table go.

"And all your kin and kinfolk,
That dwell both far and near;
I wish you a merry Christmas,
And a happy new year."

Mrs. Campeny bent down and kissed Anne, and whispered something in her ear, and Mrs. Turrell wiped her eyes a little. Then the party broke up. George galloped home to a heavy Christmas-eve dinner at Mr. De Wint's and Anne and Pamela took hands and went running like two children along the road home. The old childish days had grown very dear to them both now. Anne was to be married in May, and so little of their old life remained to them. Joe and Harold had begged hard to be allowed to accompany them home, but they were determined to have their walk alone; and while the two young men stood disconsolately at the Abbey gate they were running down the road as hard as if they were trying to run away from Fate. Perhaps one of them at least was.

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CHAPTER XV.

"And Gareth answered her with kindling eyes,
'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine
Was finer gold than any goose can lay.'"

SOON after New Year's Day Johnnie Burnet left Rose Hall. No one grieved much at his departure; even Mrs. Burnet had got tired of his peevish complainings; she had also learned to hope but little from his generosity in the future, and scarcely regretted the failure of her plans with regard to Anne's marriage. Emilia shed a few tears when her cousin stepped into the chaise and waved adieu, with David to drive him this time: but Emilia's tears lay very near the surface, a stream always ready to flow but easy to staunch.

John had made himself more agreeable to her than to any other member of the family. In her presence he could enjoy a rare sense of superiority, and it must be added her softness appealed to all that was best in the young man. He had made up for his occasional fits of crossness to her by sundry little presents of a showy and inexpensive kind, such as coppery-looking brooches with rickety pins, thimbles which turned the top of the wearer's finger black, and loose-jointed scissors, all of which impressed Emilia with a great sense of his generosity and wealth. Mr. Burnet felt as if a weight had been taken off his mind as he saw the young heir drive away; now he could go to his papers in peace, and work away at a provision for his children without hearing John's hollow cough sounding through the house, and finding himself, whether he would or no, *speculating* on the chances of his living to inherit Rose

Hall. Richard hated and despised himself for these speculations: yet he had not been able to get quit of them as long as his nephew remained in the house. Often he had thrown down his pen and tried to bury himself in a book away from these dishonorable thoughts.

Now John was out of sight the ghost seemed to be laid. His thin face was quite bright and hopeful as he stood on the door-step, with his hand on Anne's shoulder, and watched the chaise growing a speck in the distance.

"Are we to have Mr. Joe here to-night?" he asked.

"Yes, father," said Anne; "he said he would look in on his way back from Stourton."

"Then you must persuade him to stop to tea and keep up our spirits now your cousin is gone," he answered, gayly.

When Joe did come he was accompanied by George Lynton. The young gentleman was highly delighted to find the objectionable cousin had departed, though he pretended to sympathize with Mrs. Burnet on her loss. Then he begged to be allowed a cup of tea so gracefully that no female breast could have withstood him, though Mrs. Burnet, in her heart of hearts, felt rather uncomfortable, and wished the boy would be a little less attentive to Pamela. At his age it could mean nothing, she argued with herself; but she was not at all sure that Mrs. Lynton would like it.

In fact Mrs. Lynton did not like it at all, and had strongly discouraged her son's visits to the Abbey since she had known how frequently the Burnets visited there. Stourton was, she knew, but a dull place for a youth to be shut up in; but this year there was a large party assembled at the De Wint's, and all the ladies were inclined to make much of George if he would have gone among them; yet he seemed always ready to abandon this fashionable company for an afternoon at the Abbey, in the society of Harold Turrell and his friends.

"*I never thought* a taste for low company was one

of your faults, George," said his mother one day, quite worried out of her usual moderation.

"I have never given you any reason to think so," he said, stiffly.

"My dear boy, I am quite guiltless of any wish to speak disrespectfully of such excellent people as the Turrells and the Burnets. I am very glad that you should be on friendly terms with your neighbors of all ranks. But it grieves me to see you entirely neglecting the society of your equals for these people, who, however you like to look at it, are your inferiors in position; and I object as much on their account as on yours: you are only encouraging false ideas, and perhaps giving those girls, for instance, quite absurd notions of life."

"I don't think they take many ideas from me at all, mother. I can assure you they don't think me a person of nearly so much consequence as you do. Anne, for instance, always treats me as if I were a little boy just out of pinafores."

"Anne is a very sensible young woman, far the nicest of the three I should say. I am very glad to hear she is going to make such a comfortable marriage, too." George smiled, remembering his mother's remark on the friendship of the two families on a previous occasion. "The second sister is not nearly so good-looking," she continued, "but Mrs. Campeny tells me she is a clever girl."

"She is not clever; she is a genius," said George, walking with open eyes into the trap his mother had laid for him.

"Indeed! What has she a genius for?" asked Mrs. Lynton. "Stocking darning, or cookery?"

"For being beautiful, I think," said George, softly.

"I can't say I should have discovered it. There is a want of neatness and quietness about her appearance in my opinion."

"I don't fancy women admire her," said George. "Besides, you have had so little opportunity of judging. Hers is not a face to be read off like a book."

"My dear George, this romantic style of talking is very pretty, but it is not quite nice. You are a young man now, and you must remember that by talking of a girl in Pamela Burnet's position in that manner, you compromise not only yourself, but her."

"Not to my mother, I hope," said George, chipping at a pencil he held in his hand. "I expect her at least to understand me, and, as for others, you may be sure that Pamela's name is as safe with me as if she were a saint in heaven."

"You foolish boy," she said, "it is indeed time you went back to school!"

But she was less light-hearted about the matter than she pretended to be. That George should start in life entangled in some foolish boyish attachment was a fear she hardly dared name to herself, and as she thought of it she remembered sadly how little real authority she had over her son, and her influence, which was really a more potent power with him than authority, she undervalued. She made up her mind to get him out of the way as soon as she could. If this could only be managed she had no doubt all would be well. Meanwhile she would try to contrive that his visits to the Abbey should be as few as possible. She had no doubt in her own mind that Pamela was a forward young person, much dazzled by the fact of being noticed by a young gentleman of George Lynton's consequence. Still she was beset by a restless curiosity about the girl, which, as she seldom paid visits and heard very little news, she had no opportunity of gratifying. Mr. Quicke's occasional business visits to the Abbey formed almost her only chance of communication with the outer world. Failing any better informant she determined to extract a little news from him; so one day she made a point of meeting him as he came out of Lord Lynton's study, and carried him off to the music-room on pretense of showing him the new organ which had been lately put up there for her son. The old man stepped gingerly

across the polished oaken floor and stood looking at the pipes of the great instrument. As there was no one to blow for him, even had he been disposed to play, there was little else to be done.

"I wish George were here that you might hear him play," said the lady; "he has improved so wonderfully lately."

"Ay, that he has. He has just the right sort of master, you know."

"Do you think so? I am glad to hear it, but I don't admire Mr. Turrell's style myself."

Mr. Quicke never argued with ladies: so he only bowed with a jerk that made one think of a Dutch doll with springs inside it.

"My son thinks a great deal of him: he is always so enthusiastic about any one he considers a genius, particularly if no one but himself holds that opinion."

"There are worse faults than that, madam."

"Oh, don't suppose I am finding fault with my boy, but I do wish sometimes he were less romantic, more like other young men of his age in fact. To tell you the truth, Mr. Quicke, I am anxious about George; I think his visits to the Abbey Farm are rather too frequent: you are an old and trusted friend: I am sure I may speak to you with perfect confidence. It is not as if only the two young Turrells were concerned: you know Mr. Burnet's daughters are there continually; my son is very young and impulsive, and he has so little society. I think those kind of rash intimacies are best avoided, don't you? I hope the Burnets are good and quiet girls, but really I know so little about them."

"I know them," said Mr. Quicke, "and have ever since they were babies."

"Well, Anne, of course, is engaged to be married. I am sure I wish her every happiness. But the other grown-up one—Pamela: she is older than George, and I dare say she is quite steady; but he talks some rather romantic nonsense about her sometimes as you know

young boys will. I should not like it to go beyond ourselves for her sake, and I confess I should be glad to see it put a stop to: people are so scandalous in a little place like this. You know the Burnets well, Mr. Quicke; don't you think you could give just a hint? It is always at the Abbey Farm they meet. If the two young women could give up their visits for a short time, I dare say there would be no more trouble."

Mr. Quicke's long, flexible lips assumed an ambiguous expression. Mrs. Lynton could not make out whether he was angry or only very much amused; either idea was extremely distasteful to her. At last he said, with a glance towards the door, "I am afraid I am too awkward a person to be entrusted with a mission which requires so much feminine tact, nor do I think Miss Anne would be able to follow the course you recommend, madam. Perhaps a hint to Mr. George might answer the same purpose."

"If so," said the lady, coloring with vexation, "I should have had no occasion to trouble you. I must beg your pardon for having done so. I thought perhaps a word to Miss Pamela might have prevented other difficulties. I only spoke to you as her friend."

"You are quite right so far," said the little lawyer, for the first time lifting his eyes. "I am her friend; in this matter I may even constitute myself her guardian. I know the perfect purity of Pamela Burnet's mind; ever so slight a hint of the matter you have been alluding to would open out a world to her of which she has no consciousness as yet. I will not be the one to soil that white surface with its first stain of worldliness. Your anxiety for your son is quite natural, madam; but I am happy to be able to assure you that there is no cause for apprehension. Mr. George chooses his friends wisely so far."

Mrs. Lynton walked impatiently up and down the room as soon as she was alone. "Truly there is no fool like an old one," she thought; "but what can

there be about the girl that even that dried-up old lawyer is infatuated with her?"

Meantime Pamela went on her own way, little guessing what disquiet she was causing in high quarters. That year the winter broke sooner than usual. In February the wind still blew strongly from the east; but it grew milder day by day, the frost-bound earth became moist and fragrant, and the birds began to sing earlier than usual. Life seemed to be unfolding leaf by leaf like a flower, as the sun grew stronger and the days lengthened. The time to come was a glorious haze of expectation. Anne was to be married. Aunt Carry was coming to the wedding with beautiful new dresses for every one, a real scene of life was to be enacted in the dim old house, where it seemed till now people had done nothing but grow old. All this was in the background; but close at hand was the strange new sweetness of every-day life; every morning when she woke came across her visions of what might be before she lay down to sleep that night, of what rays might reach her from that fire of devotion which burned in her honor at Mere Abbey, and which had become the very light and warmth of life to her now. Nor was poor George Lynton quite forgotten in Pamela's dreams. He had grown older and a shade sadder of late, and could, at all events, no longer be looked upon as a boy. She kept a very soft place in her heart for her St. George, as she had once laughingly named him; and if she had thrown herself into the sea to go to Harold, she would certainly have clipped off a lock of her hair and given to him before she took the final plunge. Both the young men treated her like a queen, but there was no rivalry between them as yet. Harold was well pleased that his friend should worship in the outer courts of the temple, and thought more of the lad that he did so; and George, for his own part, was satisfied if only he might pay his devotions in any out-of-the-way corner, so that the divinity would sometimes smile on him.

That she should love Harold was only natural. He was more than ever sure of his friend now he found that Pamela also believed in him, and he took the second place with such perfect sweetness and generosity that no one gave him much credit for it, or even reflected that this happy state of things might come to a sudden end some day. Perhaps their own happiness had made Harold and Pamela a little selfish and careless; certainly when the latter gave him her friendliness and tender regard, she had no thought of doing him wrong, of paying him back silver for his gold. All Mrs. Lynton's attempts to send her son away at once had failed, but he had promised to start for Germany in April. He would see just the first burst of spring in the place which he loved best of any in the world; he would stay so long with his two friends, who surely would be patient with him and let him sip at their cup for a little while—he who was so soon to go into exile; and with this promise Mrs. Lynton had to content herself.

Early in March Mrs. Turrell moved into a house of her own. It belonged to Joe, and had originally had a small farm attached to it; but he had taken up the land himself, and having hitherto failed to obtain a tenant for the dwelling-house, he persuaded his aunt she would be doing him an immense favor if she would live in it, and keep it in order for him. "As for rent," he said, "it is a tumble-down place: I'd much rather Aunt Mary, you would just take the money, and do what is needed with it: it would save me a peck of trouble." Perhaps it did, but it certainly did the reverse of saving him money, for such repairs as were needed were generally done by Joe's men, and with Joe's materials, and both he and Anne always refused to hear Mrs. Turrell's mild remonstrances on the subject. At the same time Harold went to live in Merehampstead. He had one or two other pupils now besides Julia Cartwright, and found it convenient to be near his work, and his mother's house was more than two miles from the town. He

was beginning to taste the sweets of independence. He had become more steadily industrious lately, and worked even at his theatrical drudgery with new energy; with a little legacy he had inherited under his uncle's will, and his own increased earnings, he hoped to be able to get on without much help from his mother until that happy day should come when he was to wake up and find himself famous. His two rooms were very modestly furnished with odds and ends from the Abbey, and from old Uncle Lloyd's belongings, but he felt very proud of them on the first evening, as he sat down before his tea-tray in solitary grandeur. His landlady, who was no less a person than the wife of old Dickens, the coachman, stood behind him with folded hands, waiting till he should put the tea in the pot, an operation which puzzled him dreadfully, as he had no idea whether he ought to dole out one spoonful or six. An unexpected visitor came to his relief. There was a clatter of quick feet on the stairs, and without either question or permission the door flew open to admit Julia Cartwright. "You haven't had any one to see you yet, have you?" asked the young lady, anxiously.

"No, that I haven't," said Harold.

"Ah, I said I would be your very first visitor. Look here, I've brought you some ornaments, as you are setting up housekeeping; ain't they lovely?" And she produced from somewhere about her person a gorgeous china shepherd, with be-frilled and gayly-gartered legs, accompanied by a black and white dog of a curious grainy texture of coat, and as a companion group, a young lady, in the same style, embracing a lamb which bore a strong family likeness to the dog.

"Why, Julia, this is kind of you! What a nice little woman you are! I only hope I shan't break them," he added. "I'm such a careless fellow, you see."

"They are pretty strong," replied Julia; "only you must be careful of the animals' heads and tails. They are apt to get knocked off, you know."

"They are first rate," said Harold, handling the works of art with careful fingers, "particularly the lady. Upon my word she is just like you. Look at her cheeks, now. Why, you might have sat for it!"

"Me, indeed! Did you ever see me cuddling a sheep? She is pretty red, though, and so am I. However, I am glad you like them. And now I must be off home to tea."

"How came they to let you come all this way by yourself, though?"

"They didn't let me," she said, with a grin. "I got over the garden wall, and I can tell you it wasn't easy with those two china things in my pocket."

"You naughty girl," said Harold; "you had better let me walk home with you. I'm afraid you will catch it dreadfully."

"Oh, never mind," she answered, cheerfully. "But I think we might as well have a cup of tea before we go, don't you? Is yours made?"

"Oh, of course," said Harold; "I had quite forgotten the tea. But, I say, can you make it? I wish you would tell me how much to put in."

"Oh, give the tea-pot to me, do, you old stupid! Fancy not being able to make tea! You do want some one to take care of you."

She set about her work with great briskness. The tea was soon made and set on the hob to draw; then she prepared some buttered toast, put the table tidy, and drew the chairs up on each side of the fire. Not content with this she commenced putting the room generally to rights. "It is just like a man," she said, "to put the chairs all straight round the wall as if they were going to be drilled. Let us see if I can't make it all a little more comfortable for you." At last he persuaded her to sit down and drink her tea, and then took his hat to walk home with her. Julia was in no hurry. She knew she was in for a scolding, and thought she might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb. But Harold was in-

exorable, and walked her off as soon as he could. When they got home they found that Mrs. Cartwright was not at home, and no one had missed the runaway except a soft-hearted old nurse, who could be depended upon not to tell. Julia was nearly wild with delight, but Harold thought it his duty to read her a little lecture as he left her at the gate.

"You mustn't play these pranks, Julia; you are getting a young woman now, and you will have to be serious, you know—"

"Oh, bother!" said Julia, and she cut the homily short by slamming the gate in his face. Probably her heart smote her for not saying a kinder farewell; for as Harold passed along under the garden wall a pebble suddenly descended on his head and made him jump. On looking up he saw Julia's bonnet appearing over the top of the wall; but she only shouted, "Good-night," and vanished too rapidly to allow of any other remonstrance.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Love who may—I still can say,
Those who win heaven, blest are they."

ONE sweet, spring morning, when the primroses were shaking off the dew that had gathered on their closed blossoms, and the larks were singing over the great grass meadows round Rose Hall, Pamela got up with a little cloud of sadness on her face. Over the garden wall she could see far away into the green country, as she bent out of her open window. In one place a bit of the road shone whitely in the sun, the road leading out into the world which she had so often longed to travel herself, but which looked hard and unfriendly now, when she remembered that by this time to-morrow George Lynton would be traveling upon it, away from them all. They had been all so happy together; why should it end so? Perhaps she had some presentiment that such bright days do not come back, and was sorrowing for herself as well as for her friend. When we are young every new bit of happiness is as a pure gain to us, something to be stored up for the rest of life; when we are old we also take such heaven-sent gifts gladly, but take them as some compensation for what is gone. "I shall not see him again," thought Pamela, as she looked out into the distance with dim eyes, "for so long, so long! He will forget us among grand, strange folks, but we shall always remember our friend who was so gentle and good, and his beautiful face and voice that are gone away, perhaps for ever."

But fate had designed that she and George Lynton

should meet once more before Time had worked his will with either of them. Mrs. Burnet sent her on some errand that morning to the Abbey, and there she found George, who had come to make his farewell to Mrs. Campeny, with a lingering hope that he might see either Pamela or one of her sisters. He was alone in the great hall when she entered, sitting at Harold's old harpsichord playing a little melancholy cadence over and over to himself. He did not see her till her dress swept a chair just behind him. "Ah!" he cried, turning round, "have you been listening to my foolish maunderings?"

"Only for a minute," said Pamela; "but I wanted to hear you sing that song. I have never been allowed to do so, you know."

"It has not been finished," he said, "and never will be now, I imagine. Harold was to compose the music, you know, and I the words; but my verses were too doleful for him, I fancy, and it never got on. Why should he write sad music to suit me?"

"Almost any fine music is sad, I think, when it is put to sad words," said Pamela; "but I wish you would sing me as much as is finished."

"I can't do that," he answered, "but I will play you the air;" and he sat down and played a little melody—so sweet and wistful that it almost brought the tears into her eyes—without the words, which were written on a separate paper, and which she read as he played, and liked a little because they fitted themselves to the air. "Put them away; they are very sentimental and silly," said George, drawing the paper from her hand. "You know I am only a peg to hang Harold's music upon."

This was what she had read:—

My house is built beside the sea,
On sad, strange shores so far away;
No fire is lit upon its hearth;
The door stands open night and day.

For once Love came with timid feet,
And stepping o'er the threshold stone
He filled my house with happy glow,
My house that was so chill and lone.

What glories shone about his head,
And flashed across the summer blue,
The summer air, no longer sad,
The happy air the birds sang through!

Now all is changed and sad and gray—
The thistles on the sandy shore,
The moaning wind, the empty sea,
My house more lonely than before.

Yet I no meaner fires will crave,
Where Love's own flame burned clear and bright;
So still I watch, and hope, and wait—
The door set open day and night.

But sometimes when the summer winds
Blow 'twixt the lowlands and the sky,
With eyes half closed in dreams, I hear
His mighty wings go rustling by;

Some odors fall upon my sense
From that rose wreath that bound his hair—
Some radiance on my darkened eyes,
That makes my sadness less despair.

Pamela held one side of the sheet of paper—he had his hand upon the other; she seemed spell-bound as she gazed at him with her great, sad gray eyes.

"I should not have said that," he almost whispered. "I know how good you are to your friends, how much too well and how tenderly you think of them. Do not suppose I am vexed because you think more of Harold than of me; you must do so, for he is more worthy than I am, and you are as wise as you are good. If you will only say good-bye to me kindly, and will promise to think of me sometimes, I shall be very happy. Ah, Pamela! what have I done to make you cry, with my foolish verses and my melancholy face?"

"It is I who am foolish," said Pamela, with quivering lips. "I ought to comfort you when you are going away, but it is you who have to say kind and bright things to me, and the last thing you will have to remember will be me crying." And then she put her hand upon his and said very gently, "My friend, we will always think of you and talk of the days when you will come back again, Harold and I, when we are together. We shall be all alone here, and you will be among great, gay, clever people, and yet I do not think you will forget us either."

He bent down and kissed the hand that had rested for a moment on his, and then went without another word. So they parted, and for the last time in a true sense, for when they met again the world was a different place to them, and they were changed. Is not the transformation begun already—in George, as he goes striding homewards with a new look of pain and endurance on his still boyish face; and in Pamela, as she sits with Harold's music in her hand and a battle raging in her heart—a battle which she feels to be cruel; for one warrior is a gentle child-martyr, and one a giant who is victor from the first moment, and scarcely knows that there has been a struggle to win?

Mrs. Lynton felt very lonely when her scheme had succeeded and George was really gone, and in the bitterness of her heart accused Pamela Burnet as the cause of all her troubles, though she knew very well that she could not have kept her son much longer at home in any case. Now that he was gone, and such a visit could not be misconstrued by him, she determined to go herself to Rose Hall to meet her enemy face to face, and see if she could not discover what foolish spell had bewitched him so. To offer her congratulations to Anne would be a kindly act of condescension, she thought, and would make a good excuse for her visit. It was true she seldom made such expeditions, but this was a special occasion; and to give a better color to

the affair, she selected a little, old-fashioned silver tea-pot, which had been one of her own wedding gifts, and took it with her as a present for the bride elect, who she felt sure, would be much surprised and gratified by any attention from such a quarter. No doubt Anne would have been so had it been the will of Fate that the tea-pot should ever reach her hands, which, however, it never did. The Stourton horses were very fat and lazy, and considered it a gross injustice that they should be expected to take their mistress out for drives in the week as well as to church on Sunday; and as the coachman held much the same views, the carriage proceeded very slowly on the road to Rose Hall. Mrs. Lynton was beginning half to repent of her excursion. She was not popular in the neighborhood, as she knew; and the Burnets were people whom she neither liked nor was liked by. The interview would be stiff and uncomfortable to a certainty; perhaps, too, they might guess her true reason for coming in spite of the tea-pot, which really seemed a very insufficient screen for her purposes. Just at this juncture she heard a little low ripple of laughter, and looking out, whom should she see but Pamela herself walking along the path by the river-side with Harold Turrell! She had evidently been to Merehampstead on some errand, for she carried a little basket in her hand as she walked briskly along the towing path, which here ran for a short distance parallel to the road. They were a little in front of the carriage, and Mrs. Lynton had time to observe the girl's lithe and graceful figure as she went on, her blue woolen gown slightly gathered up from the wet grass, and broken into little wavering folds by the fresh wind. Apparently they had only just met, for Harold was begging to be allowed to carry her basket and she was refusing. "No," Mrs. Lynton heard, "I dare not trust you; you know if you got excited you might begin whirling it round or throwing it up in the air."

Then the carriage rumbled past them. Harold raised

his hat, and Pamela stood still for a moment and lifted her eyes to the lady with a grave look of kindness and sympathy; but before she could make any salute Mrs. Lynton gave just the stiffest possible inclination and flung herself back in her seat.

"Poor thing," said Pamela, "how pale and sad she looks! How lonely she must be in that great house! I hope she did not think me rude that I did not take any notice; one is easily offended when one is in trouble."

"She is easily offended at any time," said Harold, looking after the retreating carriage.

"My poor deluded boy!" thought Mrs. Lynton, as she drove on. "He is ready to fall down and worship this low-born girl, who does not even thank him for his folly. And his friend, too, whom he had such faith in; I wish he could see how much they care for his absence. He thinks the affection of these people is worth more than his mother's, who would die for him gladly. Oh, if he could but see them and hear their empty laughter, while I am breaking my heart for him! As if a great hulking girl like that, and a plow-boy like Harold Turrell, could understand my George!" And then she checked the coachman and told him to take the next turning homewards. She had seen more than enough, she thought: she would tell George in her first letter how his friends mourned for him on the day after his departure; and as for the tea-pot, that might go back to its old abode in the plate-chest.

Harold and Pamela went on their way, talking often of their friend, sometimes of other things. It was a bright spring morning, and they were together; they could not be altogether sad, though, perhaps, both of them had been so before they met.

"After all," said Harold, "what would not you or I give to be in his place, to be able to go and see the world, to make one's self greater and better instead of growing older and stupider in a place like this?"

"But I don't feel myself growing stupider," said Pamela.

"No; I believe you have an angel who brings you meat from heaven; you are always fresh and strong. But for myself, I long for some more enlivening atmosphere."

"That is all right for you. If you long for a thing you may get it; but it is quite different for a woman."

"I don't think you are so well contented after all!"

"I never professed to be contented," said Pamela. "I have always been wanting more and more ever since I was a child; but I think one gets more faith as one grows older. At first it seems something ought to happen with a crash and make it all new; but as one gets older things come about quietly, and one's whole life grows changed before one knows it."

"And by the time you have quite found it out life is over, or the best part of it; and then to think at the end it has all been lost for want of a little money!"

"You are getting very avaricious."

"Well, think what money would be for me: I need write no more bad music; I need no more dull my senses and harden my heart by hearing the horrible strumming of little Julia and her friends; I need no longer lead a false life, truckling to people I despise, and seeming cold to others I love; I need not count how many pats of butter I eat in the week, and haggle with my landlady over stray half-pence. I should be free and honest; I should not feel ashamed when I look up and see my old Beethoven scowling at me from the wall, and feel I have forsaken my trust, have given copper for gold, and tried to teach before I had learned to speak."

"It does not seem right that money should be so much greater than anything else," said Pamela, sighing; "yet I don't know how to contradict you."

"It is not greater than everything," said Harold, gently. "I am not so bad as to believe that, or not just now, at all events."

"You will make money some day," said Pamela,

"when you have got a name. Cannot you wait a little?"

"The world is very hard upon a poor devil with empty pockets. If George Lynton, now, took to art he would have every one patting him on the back, and ready to pay any price for his things, simply because he doesn't want the money."

"There is some reason in that. If he doesn't want the money the chances are the thing is worth having, or it wouldn't be there."

"And if you do want the money, the chances are the thing is worth nothing, or somebody else would have bought it," cried Harold, triumphantly.

"You ought to be a more melancholy person than you are, with these views," said Pamela.

"So I should be if it wasn't for you," he replied. "Besides, one forgets one's troubles sometimes, particularly in the fine weather."

"Well, there is some comfort in that; but now you must go back to your work. You can take the short cut across the fields."

"I may as well walk on with you to the gate."

"No," said Pamela. "Fate is waiting for the battle. Go back and begin to win."

"Shall I win what I most want, I wonder?" he said, as he turned away and she hurried down the lane without looking back. A gust of wind shook the trees as she passed, and scattered a sudden rain of white blossoms upon her. The blue gown disappeared before this silvery shower had time to clear, but Harold walked up and down the entrance to the lane for some time, and then strode rapidly home and wrote the long-waited-for allegro to his symphony. When Pamela told him to begin the battle with Fate, it was no vain exhortation. He could hardly disbelieve that the subtle melody that penetrated his soul as she left him had not emanated directly from her. At all events, she had bidden him work, and the power to work worthily was present with him at once.

CHAPTER XVII

"Need you tremble and pant
Like a netted lioness? is't my fault, mine?—
. . . . . Anyway,
Though triply netted, need you glare at me?"

QUITE early in May Mrs. Long arrived at Rose Hall. She was looking a little faded and worn, but her nieces found her as pretty and charming as ever, and made a great pet of her in their own way. She was very unlike the other members of the family, who were tall, largely made, and somewhat angular people. In the last generation Emilia bore some resemblance to her; but there could be no greater contrast than between her roundly-formed figure and smooth dark head, and her two tall, brown-haired elder nieces.

"I feel as if either of you girls could take me up easily if you liked, and pop me into your pocket," she said, one day, looking up at them. "Pamela, will you never have done growing, I wonder? I'm sure I hope the silk will hold out for your dresses, but I had forgotten what great creatures you are."

"I have done growing long ago, Aunt Carry; but don't suggest anything so dreadful as the silk running short. My heart is set on that glorious peacock color. See, I always carry a little bit about in my pocket to look at now and then. You don't know how lovely it is when you turn it about in the sunlight," and she produced a little, shimmering fragment of silk from her pocket, which shone green or blue, as you turned it to the light, like a peacock's breast.

There had been a long and almost angry discussion between Mrs. Burnet and her daughter on the subject of these wedding gowns. The elder lady had considered a new muslin apiece would have been quite enough in the way of finery for Pamela and Emilia; but Aunt Carry had insisted that at their age it was quite time they had a nice frock to their name, and that the proprieties demanded something more substantial than muslin for an eldest sister's wedding. She managed, as usual, to get her own way, and had herself chosen the peacock-colored dresses which gave Pamela so much satisfaction; and for the bride a modest dove color, scattered over with little sprigs of pink may. Her neat fingers worked early and late at the making of this finery. Anne, too, was very industrious, and stitched away with unwearied patience at the long hems and seams which every one else found too uninteresting. Even Pamela for once set to needlework with a will, and did it so well that every one was quite surprised, and Mrs. Burnet began to look upon her as a reformed character. As for Emilia, she picked up the pins, held skeins of silk, and made herself useful in various small ways. Sometimes, however, all the three young workwomen deserted their post: in that lovely May weather one could not always sit indoors and sew, even at wedding garments. On such occasions the two elder ladies would keep one another company, and console themselves with a more comfortable gossip than they could indulge in when the girls were by. In this way Mrs. Long learned a full account of Johnnie Burnet's visit, of his apparent attentions to Anne, and the way they were cut short.

"I had certainly hoped," she said, one day, "that he would have taken a fancy to one of the girls. It is a pity it happened to be Anne, who is really so advantageously disposed of. But, after all, he is so young, there is plenty of time for him to alter his mind. Don't *you think* he and Pamela might make a match of it *some day?*"

"Oh, he couldn't bear the sight of her. She is a great deal too free with her tongue, is Pamela. There is nothing men hate so much as a woman who is always saying sharp things. Besides, she wouldn't look at him. She just took a turn against him, and no one could ever talk her out of it. I never saw any one to equal that girl for being headstrong."

"Still she is a girl many men would admire; though I agree with you she should be more careful about what she says. It is very important for them both to get settled, she and Emilia. I'm sure I don't know what would happen if poor Richard were to go," said Carry, with a sigh.

"If John has a spark of good feeling, I should think he won't see his mother want, or his brother's children either. I know if I were in his place I'd starve before I'd take a penny of the money."

"Well, we must hope for the best, mother; but if I were you I would look after the girls, particularly Pamela. I'll tell you what I mean. That young Turrell is a great deal too fond of hanging about after her, and meeting her in her walks, and all that: you had much better put a stop to it before they get taking some foolish fancy to one another."

"You don't mean she would take up with that clumsy fellow, surely?"

"I'm sure I hope not; but it is best to be careful. A wild young man like that, with nothing to do but play the violin and talk about art and nonsense, is just likely to catch the fancy of a romantic young thing like Pamela."

"Well, Pamela is wild; but she is not quite a natural, either. However, I don't want the young man here, with his great, loud laugh and his playing and folly; no more does Richard, I'm sure. I'll forbid him the house to-morrow, if you like."

"Oh, no," replied the wily Carry. "Don't do that. *That would be the* worst thing you could do just now.

But keep your eye on him, and keep dear Pamela out of his way if you can."

Pamela came in from her walk in happy ignorance of the plots that were being laid for her advantage. She had met Mr. Quicke and had had a short conversation with him which had raised her spirits to the pitch of overflowing.

"How is it you are never playing in the church now?" she had asked him. "There is a Saturday night every week, but you do not observe it with the old honors."

"Nonsense, child; how can you know anything about it? You never come to see. Do you think I hold my festival in the open streets to raise the envy of the malicious? If I don't have music, perhaps I have something better."

"New books, is it?" she asked.

"Yes; and a beautiful Yorkshire game-pie and some clotted cream—all from my mother," said the old man in a whisper.

"That is very nice; but I am sorry the good things have stopped your music."

"Child! I have plenty of music; but I don't play—I listen. Harold plays. When the sun gets up the moon goes to bed. I don't want to play when I can hear him. He is a rare lad."

"Yes!" said Pamela, with a little blush.

"We shall all be proud of him one day, though he is not over rich in friends now. I never heard of a genius in Merehampstead before, but there is one now, mark my words."

And then the little lawyer trotted home, leaving Pamela supremely happy. She wanted no one to tell her he was a genius, not she. She had discovered that before any of them; but now it seemed other people were to begin to appreciate him—not perhaps the stupid, uneducated Merehampstead folks, but a clever man like Mr. Quicke, who could judge of him as the critics in London would judge of him one day.

That very evening Harold came to Rose Hall. It was after tea, and they had all gone out into the garden for a stroll in the twilight. Mrs. Long soon got tired, and retired to her chair, which was placed at the top of the short flight of stone steps which led downwards from the passage. Pamela had seated herself on the steps below her aunt, and was looking out with her eager face into the clear green sky, against which the line of the garden wall cut sharply. The flowery pear trees rose up like white spires, touched on their tops with the faintest rosy glow from the sunset. The trees were thinly clad as yet with young half-folded leaves that let through the mellow light from above. Only the lilacs were thick and clustering with their great heavy heads of pale blossom. Anne and her lover were walking up and down, talking softly to each other now and then. Pamela watched a little rosy cloud steal out from behind the great pear-tree and sail slowly into the open sky. Some one outside was whistling an air she knew well, and would be here presently. Before the little cloud had half finished its journey he was there, quite unconscious of Mrs. Long's rather chilly reception, leaning against the door-post, with Pamela sitting almost at his feet. What did they mean, Mrs. Long asked herself impatiently, by shaking hands in that strange, silent way? Why would he do nothing but lean against the door and stare at the back of her niece's head? Perhaps he could see a little bit of the outline of brow and cheek too, but that she did not know. At last, in despair, she began to talk herself; and when she did it was pleasantly, for it was Mrs. Long's golden rule never to make herself disagreeable to any one, particularly to men, and though she would have done almost anything else to save her niece, she drew the line here.

"Why did you not bring your violin, Mr. Turrell?" she asked. "Some music would have been delightful *this lovely evening.*"

"I am so sorry," said Harold. "I did not know you cared so much for it. You see, I know my own weakness in that respect at least, and I am afraid of pestering people with my scraping."

"I do so love music," said Aunt Carry. "Are you composing anything just now, pray?"

"Oh, well," he said, "I generally am, off and on like; but I have my lessons to attend to, you know."

"You seem to have a good deal of spare time," said Mrs. Long, smiling.

"You mean I come over here very often," guessed Harold, with great acuteness. "But you see it is my only treat, and a man does not work any the better for being for ever slaving."

"It is not so much the time you spend here as the walk I am thinking of."

"Why, it doesn't take twenty minutes!" said Harold.

"But how many twenty minutes in a week?" she asked, still smiling.

"Oh, I must have my walk," he said; "and if one wants to see one's friends, it is no use being frightened by a mile walk."

"Pamela dear, don't you think it is a little chilly?" said her aunt, drawing her shawl round her shoulders.

"Oh, auntie! why didn't you tell me before?" cried the girl, starting up. "How careless of me!" And then, whether she would or no, they took her off indoors, and deposited her by the fire which was still lighted in Richard's study. On one pretense or another, she managed to keep Pamela by her side until the rest came in, and there was no more chance of a walk in the garden. Then Harold took his leave and went. Pamela let him out; and though they lingered a moment in the hall, he said nothing but "Good-night, Pamela," and she said, "Good-night," and gave him her hand for a moment. "Mrs. Long is a nice little woman," he *thought* to himself as he walked off, "and the best *friend I* have among Pamela's relations, but she was a *little tire*some to-night."

For Pamela things did not end so quietly. Immediately after Harold's departure, she followed Mrs. Long up to her bedroom, as was usually the habit of one of the girls; for the little woman, though she was scarcely incapacitated from brushing her own hair, was very ready to have that and other like offices performed for her. Pamela was brushing away at her aunt's silky and still abundant locks, when she remarked, "My dear little niece, do you know it is not proper for young ladies to go and see their guests off, and open the door for them like a servant-maid?"

"You have forgotten our manners and customs, Aunt Carry. We never think of sending for Peggy to open the door like you grand London folks, with your stiff, inhospitable ways."

"It may be very well to do it in some cases, dear, but when the visitor is a young man it is—it is not quite nice, I think."

"What do you mean by 'nice,' aunt?"

"Nice? Well, I mean proper—the right thing to do."

"You think my showing Harold Turrell out was improper, then?"

"If I were you I would call him by his surname only."

"Mr. Turrell, then."

"Well," said Mrs. Long, "I should not like to say you did anything improper or even forward, dear child, but I want you to be very careful, and not—not give any one any chance of thinking less of you than they should, you see. The more you think of yourself the more men will think of you, you may be sure. And I am a little afraid, from what I saw, that this young man is inclined to be forward to you, to show you less respect than he should."

Mrs. Long had intended the words for a rebuke; they came to Pamela as a dreadful revelation. She clung to the back of her aunt's chair: she was very young, very inexperienced; her aunt was clever and *knew the world.* Was this, then, what he meant by his

eager face, when he met her—by his pressure of the hand, so slight as to seem involuntary, when they parted? For one awful moment doubt seized and wrung her soul. The love she had thought so tender and respectful—was it only the forward attention of a man to a woman he thought lightly of? She was past prayer, but there was the faint wish at her heart that if this were so she might die. Suddenly catching courage from the depths of despair, she turned upon her aunt and cried, "Do you believe what you are saying?"

"I hope I speak the truth, Pamela!"

"Then how can you speak to me? If I have made Mr. Turrell, who is only a friend, think so of me that he need not show me the respect he would to another woman, I wonder you let me come near you. I wouldn't in your place."

"My dear Pamela, you exaggerate things so. I never said Mr. Turrell did not respect you. I merely hinted that you were not as particular as you might be; but you are a young thing, and will learn to be wise in time—good I am sure you are already."

"There are no degrees in that sort of thing," said the girl, contemptuously. "One must be altogether respected or altogether despised; and as for folly, no one has any business to be foolish in such a matter. You must speak out, Aunt Carry, now you have begun. Why do you suppose Mr. Turrell thinks he can be forward to me, and what have I done that could make him think so?"

"Good gracious, child, how you do cross-question one! Anybody would suppose I had accused you of a murder!"

"That wouldn't have been so bad," said Pamela; "it would have been easy to answer."

"Well, now, go to bed like a good girl, and be careful in future. I am sure you mean no harm."

"I know what I mean," cried Pamela, stamping her foot; "tell me what I have done—why it is immodest

to do for Mr. Turrell what I should do for any friend who comes to the house?"

"There is a great difference between Mr. Turrell and other friends," said poor Mrs. Long, catching gratefully at the first straw that offered. "That young man has his own way to make in the world; he has not even a profession that brings him in enough to live on. Just think of the miserable consequences if he were to form any foolish attachment to you which could never come to anything. Your sister Anne is going to be comfortably settled, and I hope to see you and dear Milly likewise provided for some day. Remember, you will have scarcely anything of your own, and that girls in your position have something else to think of besides romance and nonsense. It would be very wrong of you to encourage him to come dangling after you, when you know nothing but trouble can come of it. Many a young man has had his life ruined by that kind of thoughtlessness. I think you are a good girl, Pamela, and I trust for once you will take my advice, and put a stop to this intimacy. There is no need to quarrel with your friend, but try not to see more of him than you can help. At first there may be a little difficulty, but he will soon understand his place, and things will be quite comfortable."

Pamela stood on the hearth-rug with the brush still in her hand. She looked very fierce and determined. Mrs. Long felt she had raised a spirit which she scarcely knew how to lay, and wished most devoutly she could hit upon an expedient for getting her niece quietly out of the room; but she showed no signs of moving. She had for one moment doubted herself, and almost doubted Harold. The suffering had been keen, but it had done its work. A tender veil of girlish shyness and unconsciousness had hitherto covered her love for Harold: it had been there, but an unknown, unrecognized thing, a closed bud, from which not the smallest streak of color gave notice of the coming flower. Here

she found it suddenly sprung into existence outside herself, and meeting her face to face, like one of the actual realities of life.

"You are telling me two different things," she said at last, in a tone of suppressed excitement. "First you said Mr. Turrell thought very badly of me—did not even show me respect; now you seem to say that he thinks much too well of me. Which do you mean, Aunt Carry?"

"I mean that I want you to be a good child and go to bed, and think over what I have said, and not to make my poor head ache with your dreadful questions," said Mrs. Long, smelling at her vinaigrette.

Pamela's heart began to soften a little. She knelt down and took her hand. "Do you know that you have been saying very bad things of me?" she said.

"I'm sure I did no such thing. Girls are not generally so angry at being told to be careful about those matters. When I said he was forward, I only meant it as a warning, and you shouldn't be so touchy about a mere word. At your age one always has admirers, and these little difficulties arise. I'm sure I went through enough before I married your Uncle Robert. If only young people would benefit by the experience of their elders!"

"I'm sorry if I was touchy," said Pamela, in her most stately manner, "but what you said sounded more like an accusation than a warning. However, as you are good enough to tell me you did not mean it as such, I will try to forget all about it. And now let me bathe your head with a little eau-de-cologne and water, and then I will go to bed."

Mrs. Long submitted meekly to be undressed and put to bed. Pamela tucked her up very comfortably, gave her a grave kiss, and went off; and then in the darkness her aunt began to reflect that she had managed the interview with much less than her usual tact and success. "At any rate," she consoled herself with reflecting, "it may make her think."

It did make Pamela think, though not at all in the way Mrs. Long had intended. She became more reserved to Harold, and so far her aunt congratulated herself on the success of her exhortations, though at times, as she watched the two, she felt inwardly uneasy, and determined to get the young man cleared off the premises before she went back to London. To Harold personally she was as pleasant as ever, and the deluded young man looked upon her as his one ally in the Rose Hall household. Naturally of two women he believed the one who was pretty and nice-mannered to be his friend, and the one who was old and uninteresting to be his enemy. But in this he was greatly mistaken, for Mrs. Burnet was too much occupied with domestic concerns at that time to have a spare thought to bestow upon him, but Mrs. Long was always on the watch while he was in the house, and talked to him with amiable interest about things she neither cared for nor understood, because she wanted to keep him away from Pamela.

"She is a kind little body, is your aunt," he said one day; "but I wish she wouldn't always think it her duty to talk about music. I'm sure she only does it on my account. I don't honestly believe she has the least notion of half the things she says she knows by heart; but she seems to think I'm a sort of musical-box, and can do nothing but tinkle."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"Then, when the world is born again,
And the sweet year, before thee lies,
Shall thy heart think of coming pain,
Or vex itself with memories?"

THE morning of Anne's wedding-day broke among soft, gray clouds. Pamela, who had been very anxious to wake early, overshot her mark and was at the window before sunrise. She had shut herself into her little childish play-room, where the old muslin gown of her dramatic days still lay folded away in the cupboard. On the top of the press lay a mass of something soft and crisp, with a sheet thrown over it. She just lifted a corner and took a glimpse as she passed at the three wedding dresses, and then went and opened the window. Everywhere as far as she could see the sky was gray. The fields looked greener than ever under the colorless canopy. It was so still she could hear the faint rustle of the falling rain, and away in the distance a silvery mist seemed hung between her and the trees. Was the sun really risen or not? she wondered. It was quite light; but the sky looked so chill and forlorn, it seemed a dreary interregnum—neither day nor night. Already her hair and face were wet with the falling drops. She drew her head in and shut the window. Was it really Anne's wedding-day? And she had never seen so sad a morning.

"How is it that daybreak is so sad and wild?" she asked herself. "The day seems more ready to die

than to be born. Is it always like that?" And she bent her head wearily against the window panes. Suddenly the door opened. It seemed she was not the only watcher, for Anne stood before her, with her hair pushed back from her face and in her trailing white dressing-gown, looking half solemn, half sleepy.

"Oh, Pamela, why are you up so early?" she said. "It will be such a long day, and you will be so tired. And, you naughty little sister! you will bring me bad luck if you cry on my wedding-day."

"Oh, but look at the rain; it is pouring and pouring as if it were November."

"You are a goose," said Anne, cheerfully, throwing up the window again. "These gray mornings always turn out lovely days. Why, the clouds are breaking already."

Indeed, a wonderful change was taking place while they spoke. First a soft, white light suffused the gray mass out to eastward, the clouds began to move as if some new life had entered into them, wave over wave went curling and surging about, the brightness deepened and grew to one spot. Then a sharp ray cut through the mists, the rain fell faster and faster in a glittering shower, but it seemed to melt in the light. Presently there was nothing of it left but an occasional shower of diamonds from the wet trees, the sun streamed on, the clouds were rolling away from the sweet, tender blue spaces; the song of a thrush came pouring out from who can say where, for the whole air was full of melody and delicious scents and morning freshness. The two sisters stood watching hand in hand. Then Anne knelt down by the window and hid her face in her hands, and Pamela knelt by her and threw her arm round her sister's neck. They had often said their prayers so when they were children; but they knew now it was for the last time.

"Come now, Pamela, you must go back to bed," said Anne, when they were both standing again. "It is much too early to get up."

She bent down and kissed her sister's cheek as she laid it on the pillow, and sat by her till she fell quietly asleep. When they both rose again it was a bright, sunny morning, with white flecks of cloud sailing here and there in the blue sky, and the leaves shaking themselves dry in the fresh wind.

As for the wedding itself, it was a very quiet affair. Mrs. Long had tried to make it all as smart as she could in spite of her mother and Joe. But the latter had stuck to his determination to have "no quality doings at his wedding;" so she had achieved little beyond the smart dresses for the girls. Anne looked very pretty and modest, but was as self-possessed as usual, and quite equal to the occasion. Pamela was pale and tragic, though Mr. Quicke made her laugh at the church-door by exclaiming as she appeared, "Ah, child! you look like a duchess!" Emilia clung close to her sister. She seemed rather awestruck with her own grandeur, and kept casting shy glances at her dress during the ceremony as if to assure herself that it had not undergone a like transformation to poor Cinderella's. Mrs. Cartwright and Julia were among the few strangers present, and perhaps the latter enjoyed the business more than any one there.

"I've been up in the pulpit before anybody came," she whispered to Pamela, as they went out. "I've been wanting to go up there I can't tell you how many years. It is so funny, you don't know—it makes you feel inclined to make faces, somehow."

"You can generally manage that without help from the pulpit," said Pamela.

Then they went back to Rose Hall, and there was a very substantial repast, after which Mr. Quicke made a little speech with some very fine jokes in it, which nobody understood but Harold, who was very slow about it, and astonished every one by bursting into a roar of laughter after the little lawyer had got back into his seat. Mr. Honeywood was there, and helped to cut

the cake, made very merry with the bride, and slapped the bridegroom on the back according to his usual custom on such occasions. Then Anne escaped from the table, and was not sorry to lay off her finery and put on her quiet, gray traveling gown. She came downstairs looking quite like her old self, except for that glittering little gold ring on her finger, till the illusion was dispelled by the arrival of the post-chaise from the Dragon; and before one had time to turn around, it seemed to Pamela that Anne and Joe were away down the road on their way to Yarmouth, where they were to take their modest little week of honeymoon, and Mrs. Burnet was standing on the door-step wiping her eyes.

They all watched till the post-chaise had disappeared into the sunny afternoon haze, and then the guests began to take their departure.

"It will be your turn next, you know, Pamela," said Mrs. Cartwright, as she pinned on her shawl, "and I hope you may do as well as your sister, I'm sure."

But Pamela said nothing. She was beginning to feel very dreary, and to wonder how they would possibly get on day after day without Anne in the house. As soon as every one was gone she ran up-stairs, and was even more glad to lay off her smart gown than she had been to put it on.

"There, Emilia!" she said to her sister. "Fold it up, and put it away for me, like a good girl. I never want to see the sight of it any more."

"Oh, Pamela, why? You haven't got a grease spot on it, have you?"

"I don't know, nor care," she answered, flinging herself on the bed.

"It is all right, I think," said Emilia, making a careful examination. "I think we had better put on our old merinos; grannie will want us to help put the things away, I expect."

"Then I shall go out," said Pamela. "Why can't

the plates and things wait a bit? I'm willing to do my fair share of work to-morrow, but I don't see when we have been grand ladies in silk dresses all the morning why we should have to turn to and be kitchen-maids in the afternoon. I'm sure everything is dismal enough without that. It is unnatural, and I won't do it."

She had dressed herself, and was ready to start, before it occurred to her that she was treating poor Emilia rather hardly; but as she passed through the bedroom, she found her little sister curled up like a kitten on one of the beds, sound asleep. "That is all right," thought Pamela. "They won't wake her, so I may as well go." So she slipped quietly down-stairs and out at the back door without being even seen by any one.

She started in the direction of the Abbey; Mrs. Campeny, she knew, would be quite alone, and would be glad to see her. She had come to the church, but had refused to join the party at Rose Hall, though she had been pressed to do so. In fact, it had not been a merry day to her, though she had put her sweetest and pleasantest face upon it, and Harold had told her as he led her up the aisle, in her pretty lavender gown, that people would take them for the bride and bridegroom. She had gone home after the marriage, and if she had any tears to shed on the occasion, they were all done with and wiped away when Pamela arrived. Her face was as cheerful as usual by that time, only a trifle flushed. She was not, however, alone. Perhaps Harold Turrell had fancied Pamela would go to the Abbey that afternoon; perhaps he had only gone there, as she had done, to get a little sympathy from Mrs. Campeny. At all events, there he lay on the hearth-rug, before a bright little fire, which had been lighted for his benefit in spite of the warm afternoon.

He sprung to his feet when she came in. "I thought it was your step," he said, "but why have you taken off the beautiful dress?"

"It is all over," she answered, bending down to kiss

Mrs. Campeny. "I don't want to see any more fine dresses for a long time, I think."

"I do, though," said Harold, "I wish you would always wear gorgeous colors. They suit you much better than those sober grays—though they are good in their way, too. I should like to dress you in a yellow gown, with a good deal of quaint embroidery about it, and your hair hanging about your shoulders. Didn't you like her in that shimmering blue and green, Mrs. Campeny?"

"It was very pretty," said Mrs Campeny; "but I am a stupid old woman. I don't much like changes, even when they are for the better; and she looks more like herself to me in her old gray gown."

"Herself—herself?" said Harold. "What is herself, I wonder? She was a great lady this morning, very gracious and kind in her manners; but now she has put on another self with her every-day dress, and I hardly know what to make of her."

Mrs. Campeny felt by no means comfortable. She understood quite as well as Mrs. Long that these young people were getting on dangerous ground; but to her their difficulties seemed less easy of solution. They could be parted, of course, by force; but would any good come of that? Neither Harold nor Pamela were people who forgot or altered easily. Might they not be preparing a lifelong unhappiness for themselves? Then again, she had more confidence in Harold than Mrs. Long had. "He is an honorable young man, with all his wildness," she told herself. "He will never seek to entangle her affections unless he has some hopes of being able to marry her. But then he is so careless, so childish in some ways; he scarcely knows the value of his own words. He may break her heart before he knows what he is about."

"I have had a letter from Lynton," Harold said, presently, looking up at Pamela.

"Have you? I am so very glad. Where is he? Is he well?"

"He was at Strasburg with his tutor. The letter is all about the cathedral, and so on. No, I don't think he seems well. A fellow can't be well who is in such wretched spirits, but you shall read the letter and judge for yourself. It is good enough to be printed. I do believe there is nothing under the sun he does not know something about—architecture and all the rest of it. He has the head of seventy on the shoulders of seventeen."

Pamela took the letter away to one of the great arched windows and sat down to read. It was a very long epistle, some of it quite incomprehensible to her. There was a long account of the cathedral, and much of the services he had heard there, with little bars of music, as illustrations, introduced here and there. Pamela sighed a little gentle sigh as she remembered it was Romish worship he was describing. Then at the end he wrote: "I wish I could come home with my letter before the beautiful English spring is quite over. Do you still all meet at the Abbey as you used to do in the winter, and if so, do you ever waste a thought on your unworthy friend? I hope you are all well, both at the Abbey and Rose Hall. My best congratulations to Miss Anne. I suppose her marriage draws near. I have a little wedding gift for her which I will send by the first opportunity."

Pamela's thoughts went back to those happy winter evenings, as she sat with the letter in her drooping hands. How changed everything was now!—Anne married, George away in foreign lands, and Harold—Harold more changed than any one. She could no longer shake hands with him or walk by his side without an uneasy sense of consciousness. She was unhappy when he was away, yet restless when he was near her, and she felt other people were watching him and her with unfriendly eyes. This was not the case now, however. He had gone to his harpsichord and was turning over the music which lay upon it, and Mrs. Campeny sat with her head on her hand, looking at the fire.

"Here are all our old songs," said Harold. "I thought George had taken them with him. I wish he were here to sing them; they don't suit my roaring, but I will try this. It has a good, stout accompaniment, at any rate."

"Oh yes, do sing us something," said Mrs. Campeny; and then, to a rolling, march-like tune, he sang out these words:

"Never again, oh swan, to the river
Leaning thy white breast, the banks gliding by,
Never again shall be song of thy singing
Borne through the rushes and wafted on high.

"Hushed be all voices of woodland and meadow,
Dove on the green bough and lark on the wing;
Some sunny morning may serve for your singing,
This bird alone has but one song to sing.

"One song to sing while the sunset glows redly,
As down the red river he goes to the sea,
One great sad song of a life that is passing
Out from our world to the life that shall be.

"Bear him, oh river, farther and swifter,
Gliding on steadfastly into the west,
He watching perhaps for some shore that we know not,
Journeying, journeying on to his rest.

"Farewell, pale voyager, who would not share with thee,
Spite of thy silence, the fate that is thine—
Yearning a lifetime long, ending in fairest song,
Silence that breaks into music divine?"

"Have you nothing more cheerful than that for a wedding day?" said Mrs. Campeny.

"It is George's," replied Harold. "He always took a melancholy view of life; but I am getting to think it was pretty true,—for folks who have not well-filled pockets at any rate, though it must all be plain sailing for him, I should say."

Pamela got up to go. Both she and Mrs. Campeny

had in their own minds determined that Harold should not walk home with her, but when he also rose and took up his hat to accompany her, as a matter of course, they found it not so easy to dispose of him. Pamela could only say weakly, "Please let me go alone," and Mrs. Campeny got out nothing but, "You had better stay and have some tea with me"—which he of course refused. The end of it was that he carried his point, and two minutes later the young people were walking quickly through the twilight together. They spoke scarcely a word the whole way home. It seemed to Harold that if he opened his lips at all he must say, "Pamela, I love you with all my soul. We have neither of us any money, but I want you to love me in patience till I can ask you to marry me. Will you take part for me against all your friends, or will you tell no one, and let a secret eat into your innocent, truthful life?" He knew one of those alternatives she must choose if he told her what he so longed to tell; and it needed no precautions of Mrs. Long's to seal his lips. He would have died sooner than have spoken to her in such a way. He would work for her, morning, noon, and night; he would see her sometimes, to keep his courage from failing, his heart from breaking; but so far as he knew he would look no look, speak no word, to ruffle the pure calm of her mind. "A young girl is so different from a man," he thought; "she loves without knowing it, and Pamela is so simple and child-like. I am only her friend now, but some day I shall be able to throw off the mask, and she will find that she loves me." The time of waiting seemed easy to him, for he would see her continually all the while, and no pang of doubt, or weariness of disappointment should be hers. He thought he had shut her into a charmed circle, where she could dream away some happy years, till the moment should come when he could break through and claim her for his own. He little knew what rude hands had been at work at the spell, and how his enchantment had been already shattered.

He shook hands quietly with her at her own door, and whatever his face may have said she could not see, for she never raised her eyes till he had left her. Surely the two women within might have spared them a little and given time a chance of setting things right.

"It must be put a stop to," said Mrs. Long.

"I couldn't have believed it of one of my grandchildren," chimed in Mrs. Burnet. "Trapsing about the country at this time of night with young men. I must speak to her father."

"Better give a hint to the young man, I think," rejoined her daughter, "and tell him we wish his visits to cease for a time."

"I don't know, I'm sure. I dare say he will only snap his fingers at me. I did think when Anne was off my hands I should have a little peace, but Pamela will be ten times worse to manage. She always was."

" Don't fret yourself, mother. I'll speak to Richard. He ought not to let all these worries fall upon you. And if the worst comes to the worst, and we can't get rid of him, I'll take Pamela up to town with me when I go. I wouldn't say anything to her if I were you. I gave her just a hint the other day. She is a high-spirited girl, and we must not press her too hard."

And while they were talking, Pamela's footsteps went slowly up-stairs to the old bedroom, that seemed so lonely and empty now Anne's bright face and cheerful step were gone from it. In some moods we see more things than those that are before our eyes, and though she did not know of the conference going on below, she seemed to scent trouble in the air, and sighed as she went.

CHAPTER XIX.

"A solitary brier the bank puts forth
To save our swan's nest floating out to sea."

THE days immediately following Anne's wedding were certainly the most unhappy that Pamela had experienced so far. Her watchful guardians had uttered no reproof; yet by a hundred little signs they made her understand that she was in disgrace. If she were going out they asked her where she was going, or begged that she would take a quiet walk, and be in early, or suggested that she should take Emilia with her. If she looked sad, as, indeed, she felt at that time, she was told not to mope. If she ventured to argue with her father, as she sometimes did now, upon subjects he took an interest in, she was warned to be modest and ladylike, and informed that that style of talking is bad enough in a young man, but in a woman it is quite unbearable. Her only friend now was her father. He was very kind to her in those days, with a tenderness she never forgot. Next to herself, he missed Anne more than any one else in the house did; and their common loss formed a new bond of sympathy between father and daughter. Mrs. Long had had her threatened interview with her brother, but he had thought very lightly of her fears and precautions.

"Women are always imagining love affairs," he had said. "I don't suppose Harold Turrell ever wasted five minutes' thought upon Pamela, nor Pamela upon him. She is not a soft, sentimental kind of girl at all.

However, if there is going to be any talking and scandal, the sooner it is put a stop to the better."

"You are quite right there, my dear Richard," Mrs. Long had answered; "but the thing is, how *are* we to put a stop to it? Don't you think it would be better to ask him not to come here at all?"

"No; really I can't say that I do. It seems to me it would be rather rude and uncalled for. However, as you take the matter into your own hands, you must settle it your own way. I shouldn't like to say such a thing myself; but dear me, Caroline, you are a clever woman—can't you manage to put a foolish little matter like this to rights without worrying me about it?"

"I can't forbid people to come to your house, you know—not without any authority from you."

"Well, then, settle it how you please. You have my authority to ask him not to come here if you like. Of course you will tell him the reason, which has nothing to do with him personally. I don't like the young man, but I have no wish to be discourteous to him. I really think it a mistake to care so much about a little gossip, but do as you like. Only mind one thing," he added, in another and less indifferent tone, "I won't have Pamela worried with any of this. She has not been to blame, and the child looks pale and ill."

And so it came to pass that Pamela suffered only a silent persecution, and had never so much as a chance of defending herself. The days dragged on very wearily. She never met Harold, and she told herself it was better so, though in fact she was languishing for a word or even a look of kindness. Anne would be home in two days more, she remembered, one bright morning as she walked under the pear trees, which had cast off their white clothing now, and were dressed in tender green, and that thought cheered her a little. That very day the climax came. Harold had again had some unexpected successes. He had received an amount of work from one of his patrons which, in fact,

meant a certain income to him for some time. His first thought was of Pamela. He would go and see her first, and receive her glad sympathy before he even carried the good news to his mother.

Pamela was out when he arrived: indeed she was only returning as he left the house, or with his newly-learned suspicion he would most likely have believed that statement to be false, together with every word Mrs. Long had spoken to him.

He was standing on the door-steps, with the door closed upon him, when Pamela returned, and was tightening the string of a parcel of papers which he carried. She put out her hand to him with a shy pleasure, and then he raised his head. His face was ashy white; he looked as if he had received some mortal wound, which, hide it as he might, must drag him down presently.

"Won't you come in?" faltered Pamela, looking up at him with her great terror-stricken eyes, for indeed she had never seen on human face the traces of such suffering before.

"No," he said, huskily; "I am going away. Good-bye, Pamela."

Then it all flashed upon her. They were sending him away for ever. A word from her would have stopped him, but how could she speak it? Better he should go and they should lose each other for ever, than that she should sink one hair's breadth from the high place she held in his heart. She only looked at him in silent misery, and said also "good-bye." Then he went away without once raising his eyes, and she felt that she herself had sealed their doom.

"I have been very gentle with him," said Mrs. Long to her mother; "but he entirely understands he is not to come here any more. He quite acknowledged that he has no means to speak of, and, I think, though he did not say much, he understood that it would be better for him, if possible, to leave the neighborhood for a

time. And now, dear mother, we must cheer up poor Pamela. A girl always feels losing her first lover, but those troubles don't last long. And I think you had better let me take her up to town when I go: she looks as if she needed a change, poor dear child."

Pamela, as her father remarked, was not of a soft or sentimental nature according to the vulgar meanings of those terms, and when she appeared at dinner and tea-time, and seemed, if anything, more merry than usual, her aunt congratulated herself on having made a very clever stroke, and thought how wise she had been to interfere before any mischief had been done. One little incident occurred, however, which made her doubt her own success, though only for a moment.

That night, or rather the next morning, some two hours before day-break, the whole house was awakened by a long, wailing shriek, followed by a succession of sobs and cries, apparently proceeding from the girls' bedroom. Mrs. Long sat up shivering in her bed. All sorts of horrible stories came flooding into her mind, as she put on her dressing-gown and slippers, of people who had gone mad, or killed themselves, or had brain fever from thwarted fancies; and with much more than her usual alacrity she crossed the passage and opened the door of her nieces' room. There was just light enough from the waning moon for her to see Emilia sitting on the edge of her bed, still sobbing and catching her breath hysterically, while Pamela with her arms thrown round her sister seemed vainly trying to sooth her.

"What on earth is the matter, dear Milly?" asked Mrs. Long, considerably relieved; and then all the rest of the household came pouring in, in hastily made toilets, the women half beside themselves with fright, all asking the same question at once.

"It is nothing at all," explained Pamela, rather contemptuously. "I was walking about, and she half woke up, I suppose, and just caught sight of me in the moonlight, and then she was frightened and screamed."

"What a naughty child you are then, Emilia, to scare everybody out of their wits for nothing," said Mrs. Burnet. "Just lie down and keep quiet, while I go and fetch you some camphor julep."

"Yes do, mother," put in their father. "Scolding won't do much good."

"But why were you such a silly girl as to go marching about your room at this hour of the night, my dear Pamela?" asked Mrs. Long, cheerfully. "You are not ill, are you?"

"I am not ill, thank you," she said. "I did not know walking about my room at nights was one of the things you had an objection to, Aunt Carry." And then she went away into the dressing-room and shut the door.

Just before they left the room, when Emilia had drunk her camphor julep and order was restored, Mr. Burnet knocked at the door and said, "Good-night, Pamela." She came out the moment she heard his voice, and held up her face to be kissed, and then he discovered it was wet with tears.

"My child, what is it?" he said, anxiously. "You are crying, and your hands are so hot. Has your aunt been troubling you?" he guessed, with sudden illumination.

"Never mind, father, it is all over now," she said. "I shall be all right to-morrow morning,—when it comes." But he went off to bed wishing he had managed the affair himself, and doubting whether Carry had used her *carte-blanche* altogether well.

When Anne came back from her short holiday, she found many alterations had taken place. Pamela was looking pale, sad, and yet mutinous. Harold was fierce, and sometimes ill-tempered, but of him she saw little. Perhaps the greatest surprise to the bride and bridegroom was to find that Mrs. Campeny had gone from the Abbey, leaving no trace behind her but a letter

written to Joe and Anne. "It would be simply robbing you," she wrote, "to pretend to be your housekeeper, now you have a wife of your own. Thanks to your liberality, dear Mr. Joe, I have plenty to keep me in comfort for my life. I could not bear to go far from you, and I had the intention of living in Merehampstead, so as to be near to you and yours. But your aunt has kindly offered me a home, and as she does not seem likely to have Miss Nelly with her now Miss Polly is married, I am glad to hope I may be more use there than living alone. The chickens and all that are rather much for her to manage, not being accustomed; and we shall be two old bodies well suited together. Married folks are best alone, believe me, Mr. Joe."

"What nonsense it is," said Joe, when he came to this. "As if we were to be billing and cooing all our lives. But we will have her back, Anne, before a week is over."

Mrs. Campeny held to her determination in spite of this prophecy; and though, whenever there was sickness in the house, or when hay-making or harvesting were going on, she was always ready to pay a visit to the Abbey and lend a helping hand, she never came back for good to her old home. No doubt she was wise, and seeing the separation was inevitable, did well to retire with honor and dignity. She and Mrs. Turrell were, as she remarked, well suited; and, in spite of Mrs. Campeny's rather anomalous position at the Little Farm, they lived very happily and peaceably together. Mrs. Turrell was ostensibly mistress: but Mrs. Campeny, as usual, took the lead, and gave a general impression to those about her that if she did not quite manage the machinery of the universe, at least she had a good deal to do with it, and that whether the world would contrive to turn round without her assistance was an unsolved problem.

Soon after her return Anne was initiated into the secret of the plans with regard to Pamela and Harold.

Indeed her co-operation was quite necessary to insure their success, for there was no place where the young people were so likely to meet as at her house.

"I hope you will do your best to keep him away from the Abbey," said Mrs. Long, in conclusion. "It will only be for a month or two, till I carry dear Pamela off with me."

"I don't see what I can do," answered Anne. "I can't turn my husband's cousin out of the house unless he does something to deserve it, and of course Pamela must come here."

"You must think of your own sister before your husband's cousin, Anne. It is for her interest we are working."

"I think you might have waited a little," said Anne, who had become more pronounced in her opinions since she was married. "I am sure you might trust Harold not to say anything that would unsettle her, and if they really do love one another, what is the use of making them both unhappy before the time? They will have trouble enough anyhow if that is the case. I will speak to Joe about it," she promised at last; "but I don't think you can expect him to forbid the house to his own kinsman. Besides, as long as they are both here, they are sure to meet now and then."

"I am sure Joe will do anything you ask him, dear," said Mrs. Long; "he is such a model husband."

"You are quite mistaken, Aunt Carry," said Anne, flushing. "Joe has a will of his own, I am happy to say, like any other man. Besides, I am not going to begin making quarrels in the family the first thing. However, you may trust Pamela here," added the young matron, with great dignity. "You may be sure I shall take good care of my own sister."

So Providence, which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, had raised up a friend for Harold and Pamela in their trouble; and though that summer-time had its bitternesses it was not without its many gleams of sweetness

and continual glimmerings of hope. Perhaps, looking back in after days, there was no portion of their life they would so willingly have lived over again as this, with its rare, half-forbidden meetings, and its secret joys and anxieties. The shadow of real parting lay in the distance, for it was quite decided that Pamela was to go to London with her aunt in the autumn. Harold, too, was to go away abroad, if he could afford it, to study; but the time would pass, he told himself, and they could wait for one another. Yet he longed very often for some word of assurance from her lips that she would be trusting and hopeful while he was away. It would have made the waiting much easier for him, but on her it would entail certain persecution at home. How often he checked the words at his very lips, how often he absolutely fled from her presence lest he should be led over the edge of temptation, she little knew. He fought a hard battle with himself, for his whole life had been one of almost unchecked impulses, some good, some bad. From the time he had been a child he had insisted on having his own way with such energy that he had generally managed to get it in spite of difficulties. As a little fellow he would fight, kick, scratch until he got what he wanted, and any severe correction seemed to turn him into a small demon for the time. After his fits of naughtiness a reaction would set in, and his remorse would take the form of most fanciful self-inflicted punishments, even more difficult to restrain than his original rebellion.

Now, for the first time, he found himself doing real battle with his own will, and he sometimes even wondered himself at the restraint which he kept over the strongest of his passions. He did not know that Pamela helped him. Her keenly sensitive nature could not fail to give back some echo of the struggle which filled his heart; but she was a brave girl, and it was well for him that her nature was brave enough and strong enough to keep some hold over the fiery passions she had

roused. The clear gray light from her eyes, the movement of her long hands, the tender gravity which now so often shaded her face, subdued and enchained him. He became humble and gentle in her presence, and scarcely knew his own voice when he spoke to her—it had grown so soft and changed. And yet every day the fruit grew riper on the wall, the wheat became ruddy in the sun, and the day of their parting came nearer and nearer.

CHAPTER XX.

"Now came fulfillment of the year's desire;
The tall wheat, colored by the August fire
Grew heavy-headed, dreading its decay."

IT was a glowing morning late in August when Pamela started on her farewell visit to Mere Abbey. The next day was to be devoted to packing, and the next to that they were to start on their journey. On arriving, she found Anne sitting in the stone hall, in company with Jenny and little Totty Jones, with a basket of bloomy purple plums before her, which they were all helping to cut open and stone.

"I'm so sorry to have the preserving about to-day, dear," she said, putting her juice-stained hands behind her back while she kissed her sister. "But really the fruit has come on so fast lately, and I don't think the plums would have kept another day. Oh no! you mustn't help us, with that nice fresh gown on; what would grannie say? You must just sit still and tell us the news."

Pamela sat down and watched the domestic operations with wistful eyes. Anne had grown more comely and pleasant than ever since her marriage. There was a merry bustle about all her doings which spoke of her busy, contented life, and said how well she and her destiny suited each other. How far behind were the days when the two sisters had been glad together and sorry together! Now Pamela's happiness was launched on such stormy and tempestuous seas, and Anne's was

anchored for ever in this quiet bay. It was very trying to sit there with nothing to do, and watch the busy fingers of the others; and of conversation there was not much, for Anne was taken up with her plums, and every now and then she stopped to crack the kernels with a hammer that lay by her side, or to remind Totty not to suck her fingers so often. Pamela got tired of it at last and took up a book—"I am going to say good-bye to the garden," she said. "I will come in when I hear the dinner-bell. It will be all over by that time, won't it?"

"Oh yes," said Anne, "we shall be all clean and respectable by that time."

She wandered on and on, beyond the limits of the garden, to where a little winding path led down to the river. There was an old boat-house there which had always been a favorite resort of hers, and which Joe had lately had mended up and made a fit shelter for the smart, little green-painted boat he had bought about the time of his marriage. It was a delightful refuge for a hot summer day. Outside, one could see the river, blue and sunlit, with its fringe of willows on the other side, and the dragon-flies skimming about on their wonderful wings. Now and then a kingfisher came curving down from above, or a fish rose and made great widening circles on the still water. Inside, all was cool, green, and shady, and there was a pleasant smell of new-cut wood, like a carpenter's shop. Pamela heaped an armful of shavings against the side of an old box, and sat down. Her book was open in her hand, but how could she read with the drowsy hum of the summer insects in her ears, and the musical flap, flap of the water against the sides of the little boat? She gave it up at last, and curled her arm comfortably over the top of the box, laid her head on her arm, and then dropped peacefully asleep. She dreamed she was out in a boat with Harold Turrell, on a blue and smiling sea. Presently he looked over the side and said, "It is a thou-

sand fathoms down and we shall begin to sink soon;" but he said it in quite a matter-of-fact way, and there seemed to be nothing alarming in the prospect. A flock of birds were flying overhead, singing quaint melodies. Suddenly they became silent, and a cold dread seized upon Pamela's heart. Then the dream began to melt away. She felt the hardness of the box under her arm, the bright horizon closed in to the four walls of the boat-house; only one part of the vision was realized. Harold stood before her, and the bright sun spots reflected from the water were flying over her head where the birds had been.

"Are you going up to the Abbey?" asked Pamela, when the first embarrassment of the meeting had been got over.

"No; I was going to my mother's; but I meant to look in. I knew I should find you here, and I wanted to say good-bye."

"Have I been asleep long?"

"Scarcely a minute, I should say. I am afraid I woke you up, but I could not resist coming in."

"It always makes one sleepy, this old boat-house. I believe there is a magic about it. I think of it sometimes when I am tired, and wish I could come away here and lie down and rest, and forget everything."

"Where does the magic lie?"

"In the quiet water, I think, close under one's feet, and in those green lights that go flitting overhead. There are lights like that in church; I think they come from that old brass over the De Wints' vault. They go dancing all round our pew in the morning. When I was a little girl I used to half think they were the spirits of the people who are buried underneath, and couldn't come to church properly any more."

"Weren't you frightened of them? How could you take such a ghoulish fancy?" asked Harold.

"No; but I did not quite like it if they came right on my hands, or glaring in my eyes, you know."

"You were a brave little thing, Pamela. You are so now; anybody might trust to your courage."

He stood throwing little white chips of wood into the water, and watching how the boats attracted and sucked them under. He was doubting if it would not be best to trust to her courage finally. They were all armed against him; they were stronger than he, and were making cruel use of their strength; they were taking Pamela away, and would not scruple to use any measures, fair or foul, to keep her apart from him. He was aggrieved by the want of confidence they had shown him, and especially by Mrs. Long's treachery. Why not take the straightforward course, and be honest with Pamela? He glanced down at her: she still sat on the heap of shavings, her arms clasped round her knees, her head thrown slightly back, and resting on the box. He had, perhaps, exaggerated notions of duty, as of everything else, when once he began to think about it. At any rate, he thought it was his evil, and not his good, angel that suggested this course of action; he wrestled with his temptation; he overcame it, and lived to think that what he had struggled against would have been right, and that with this agony of soul he had resisted the right, and yielded to most bitter wrong. No wonder if he fell into errors and weaknesses afterwards. Such a mistake can hardly be set right, such a wound can hardly be healed in this life. To suffer for what seems good, and then to find the straight and easy course would have been the right one, and that we have wrung our hearts for nothing—this is perhaps the truest martyrdom, and the most common.

"And so you are going the day after to-morrow," he said at last.

"Yes."

"I shall leave here soon, I hope. George Lynton wants me to join him. I don't think I shall do that, but I should like to go abroad. At any rate, I dare say I shall be in London in a month or so."

"Will you?" said Pamela, looking up. "Then we shall see you."

"I am afraid not. Your aunt is not friendly to me now. I don't think she will let me come within speaking distance. But I may get a glimpse of you possibly. It is only a matter of time," he added, drawing himself up; "I shall come back sooner or later, Pamela. Will you be glad to see me when I do come?"

"Of course I shall be glad to see you," she said, looking down with quivering lips.

"And, Pamela, I want to ask you one more thing. It is nothing particular—only what any friend might ask of you. My mother has a lot of little locks of hair in her work-box, from all sorts of friends and relations; will you give me a little bit of yours, just for remembrance, you know?"

She hesitated for a moment, twining her long fingers in a wisp of straw.

"There is no harm," he said, looking a little hurt; "or I would not ask you. You may tell your grandmother if you like, but I did not think you would refuse me."

"I was not going to refuse," said Pamela; "I was only surprised at you. I did not think men cared for such things. But I will cut off a little bit for you if you wish it."

"I must have it now," he answered. "That great plait has come all unrolled: you can easily cut off a piece with my knife, just a little bit, so as not to show. It is such pretty, rough hair, quite unlike any one else's."

He put the little lock inside a letter, and the letter in his pocket, scarcely allowing himself to touch it in her presence; and then he turned towards the door, for the dinner-bell was chiming from the Abbey, and Pamela had risen to her feet, and tucked up her truant tresses. It seemed to her that she was always saying good-bye to some one, or to some pleasant state of things. George had gone; then Harold had been cut off from

her daily life and common intercourse; now the climax was come, and they were to be parted for many months. perhaps for a time too long to be counted by months. It was not till he had left her that she fully realized it, So long as he was there, she lived and breathed in his presence; so long as she could see him making his way through the little copse, she could do nothing but watch; but when he was fairly out of sight, then she went back to the heap of shavings and bent her head to the storm for a few minutes, before she turned to face the world under its new and dreary aspect.

Pamela did not take advantage of Harold's permission to tell her grandmother of the incident of the lock of hair. Indeed, she never mentioned the meeting in the boat-house at all. She had no confidence in any one now except Anne, and Anne was taken up with her own affairs, and could only bestow upon her sister the small amount of attention she could spare from her husband. The parting between the two sisters was very affectionate, but Pamela was a little jarred by Anne's unruffled cheeriness.

"I shall write and ask you to do lots of shopping for me before you come back," she said, as the gig and Joe came to the door to take Pamela home.

"And, Anne, you will write to me often, won't you?"

"As often as I can find anything to say, dear; but you don't care to hear what we had for dinner, or how the last brew of ale turned out, do you."

"Yes; any little scraps of news. I am to be away so long, and I shall seem like a stranger when I come back, if you don't tell me everything. Oh, Anne, do you think they will let me come home after Christmas?"

"Of course they will; but you won't want to come home by that time. Come, dear, you must cheer up. You are not going to Jericho; and you, who always wanted to see the world!" But Pamela had thrown her arms round her sister's neck, and burst into tears. The pent-up excitement of the day had at last found

an outlet, and she sobbed almost hysterically. Poor Joe was quite beside himself with distress, and nearly choked her with a huge mug of water which Anne sent him to fetch. He looked so comically anxious as he tried to put the edge of the mug between her teeth, that Pamela burst out laughing, which gave him such a start that he upset a great part of the water down the front of her dress.

"They are skittish creatures, are girls," he muttered, as he went off with his mug; "but, thank heaven, Anne isn't given to such tricks."

CHAPTER XXI.

"I looked for that which is not, nor can be,
And hope deferred made my heart sick in truth:
But years must pass before a hope of youth
Is resigned utterly."

PAMELA'S spirits improved with the bustle of packing and starting. Mrs. Long was very kind, and talked much about how pleased Uncle Robert would be to have her again, and to take her out sight-seeing as he used to do. Only once she alluded to her niece's reluctance to go with her.

"You think me a horrid, cruel old monster of an aunt now, don't you, dear, to carry you off against your wish? But one day you'll see how wise it was, and how nice a holiday it will give you. And then you will forgive poor Aunt Carry. So try and believe we are doing what is best for you, my child, and try and be merry and happy, as your uncle likes to see you."

It was impossible not to thaw before such continual and winning kindness. The old confidence and admiration could never quite return, but Pamela became once more very much attached to her aunt. With the winter weather came some return of Mrs. Long's frequent ill-health, and her patience and sweetness of temper could not fail to endear her to her nurse. Pamela watched her tenderly through some weeks of suffering, with positive wonder at her strength of endurance. At the end of the time she had put away the remembrance of old sorrows and offenses in some dark corner of her

mind, and had determined to ignore what she could not forget. About the time that her aunt was getting better she heard that Harold Turrell had started on his travels. He was going to Munich to study under some great professor, to whom George Lynton had sent him a letter of introduction. This was all Anne told about him, except that he would be in London for a few days before he left England. From that day Pamela watched and watched. Surely he would not be in London without coming to see her; and night after night she lay awake wondering, "Would he come to-morrow; would he guess at what hour she went out for her walk; or should she come in some day, and find he had been and gone, and the chance was over?"

She would have stopped at home altogether if she could, but as that was not allowed she made her walks as short as possible, and always contrived to be at home in the afternoon, when she thought he would be most likely to come. But day after day went by, and he never came, till at last she told herself all hope was over, and he must have left England.

"He might have come to the door to ask, at any rate," she said to herself, bitterly, as she walked slowly along in the dusk of a November evening. "I would have gone even to look at the outside of the house where he lives. Three months seem such a little time to forget one in;" and she thought of the lock of hair with an angry blush.

Five minutes later she was in their own street. There was some one coming down the steps from the door as she approached. She looked up. The tall brick houses towered on either side, but there was a little strip of clear, pale sky between, and that gave light enough to recognize the rather short, broad figure, and the old impatient toss of the head. It was the second time she had found him shut out, as it were, from her house. She had grown quick to discern treachery now, and the first thing she asked him was:

"*Why did you* not come to see us before?"

"I have been twice," he said. "They told me you were out. Did they never let you know?"

"I did not know," she said, looking down.

At that moment Mrs. Long appeared in the passage, just in time to hear some very forcible expressions from her departing visitor.

"I think you had better come in, Pamela," she said, coolly. "I am sorry to find you should allow that young man to use such language to you, dear," she added, when she had her charge safely on the right side of the door. "You forget what is due to yourself as a lady, and so does he; or, rather, I suppose he has not had to do with many, and does not know."

"He says he has been here twice before," Pamela answered, fiercely. "Why did no one tell me?"

"I had very good reasons for not telling you at the time. You would have known afterwards. As long as you are staying with me, Pamela, I am the best judge as to what visitors you should receive, and I don't consider Mr. Turrell one. I should think you must agree with me, after the nice specimen of his language you have just heard."

"Then it would have been better to have told me plainly that he had been here and had been sent away. It is a pity you make so many mysteries, Aunt Carry," and she walked away up-stairs.

"And, oh dear, how angry she did look!" ejaculated Mrs. Long, when she recounted the scene to her husband.

"I don't wonder at it," said Mr. Long. "Why can't you leave the girl and her love affairs alone. You will scheme and manage her into a brain fever one of these days."

"And you would let them run and get married without a penny to buy them bread and cheese!"

"They have a great deal too much sense to do that, *I believe;* Pamela has, at any rate. However, you *must go* your own gait, I suppose."

Soon after Harold's visit a more welcome guest appeared at the Long's, in the person of Johnnie Burnet. Pamela found her cousin even more objectionable than on their first acquaintance, partly, perhaps, because he was more polite and marked in his attentions to her. But Mrs. Long took a favorable view of her nephew's character, and hoped for great consequences from his visit.

"He seems so fond of our dear Pamela," she wrote to Anne, "and I cannot but hope much good may arise from their liking for one another."

"That is nonsense," said Anne to her husband, laying down the letter. "Pamela hates the very sight of him."

"I'll tell you what, Anne," answered Joe, hitting his fist on the table; "I want to keep friendly with all your folks, and I'm as fond of Pamela as if she was my own sister; but if ever she goes and marries that confounded young jackanapes, I'll be hanged if her husband shall ever darken my doors."

"You are a great stupid!" said Anne. "Pamela would as soon eat him as marry him."

In fact, Anne had expressed her sister's sentiments very truly; but it was long before Johnnie discovered them. There was no Joe Turrell to open his eyes in this case, and his faculties were by no means acute. But by degrees it became pretty evident to him that Pamela would have nothing to say to him, and that if she had been less unfavorably disposed, even motives of economy would hardly justify him in taking to himself such a fire-brand of a wife. He returned to Manchester early in March, leaving Mrs. Long much disappointed, and Pamela as greatly relieved at his departure. Johnnie himself was by no means discouraged; and told himself as he traveled home that of the three girls he had always liked little Emilia far the best. "One might manage her," he reflected; "but as for those *great strapping girls*—!"

Mrs. Long was ill again after her nephew left, and Pamela stayed on with her till the end of April. Then at last the climax came to her impatience. She ran into her aunt's room one morning with an open letter in her hand. "Oh, Aunt Carry!" she cried, "you must let me go home now. Anne has a little daughter! The letter is from father. There is a lot more news. Mr. Quicke is ill, he says. But I have hardly read it. Do let me go home now."

"Of course you shall go if you like, child. Give me the letter. I want to hear all about Anne."

"And you don't think me ungrateful, auntie?"

"If you are, I suppose you can't help it, Pamela. At any rate, you shall go home when you like."

And so the time of Pamela's banishment came to an end, and she was back at Merehampstead in time to keep the first anniversary of her sister's wedding-day. She was glad to find herself once more among old familiar scenes and faces, and to be able to hear some news of Harold now and then from those who were not unfriendly to him. Nevertheless, as the summer went on life seemed to be growing a little gray and sad to her, and her thoughts often went back longingly to last year with its hopes and troubles. Hopes and troubles seemed to have alike ended for her now, for a time at any rate. Rose Hall was a sombre place in those days. Mrs. Burnet seemed to succumb suddenly to age and infirmity. A few days' illness reduced her from a healthy, bustling old woman to a querulous invalid; and though she had occasional revivals of her old activity they were fitful and short-lived, and she never again took her old place in the house.

As her grandmother's star sunk in the domestic horizon, Pamela's rose. Perhaps it was well for her that she had to partly lay aside her old dreams and turn nurse and housekeeper. People who did not know her were surprised to find how well she performed her duties, and no one more so than her father. "What a good

little woman you are getting," he said to her one day when he found her busy over a book of house accounts. "You will make as good a wife as Anne some day." But in spite of such scraps of praise she often found her life a very weary one, and wondered whether Harold would never come back and kindle the old fires of love and happiness.

She had two friends, however, who helped her through her time of waiting. They were Mr. Quicke and her little niece. Mr. Quicke had lost his mother shortly before Pamela returned from London, and though he never made any allusion to his troubles she always associated his ill-health and poor spirits at the time with this loss.

Now that Harold was away, he resumed his organ playing on Saturday evenings, and very often had Pamela for a listener. She would creep into the dim church to her old place by the font, and sit with half-closed eyes dreaming that she heard Harold's footstep on the pavement and his voice close behind her. Nowhere could she bring his image so keenly before her as there, and in the old boat-house where she had parted from him, and where, long after, she would go and lean her tired head upon the same old box, and cry for her dream and her happy awakening to come back to her once more. But it was not only with his music that Mr. Quicke helped her. He had news of Harold sometimes, and in the midst of his own sadness and failing health, he would generally find some cheering words for Pamela. He lent her books too, and sometimes read her bits of the long letters he had from George Lynton, who could not get on without some correspondent in Pamela's vicinity. Little Nancy was her other comforter. From the first she was a fat, determined baby, of an aggressive but affectionate nature, and very fond of her aunt. By the time she was old enough to take notice and crow, a firm friendship was established between them, and the child would even leave her mother's lap to come to Pamela.

"Nancy," she said one day, taking the child in her arms, "you will grow up some day and find you can turn me round your fat little fingers, if I don't put the curb on you now; and who knows what terrible scrape you may lead me into?"

"That will be true enough," said Anne, "if you go on spoiling the child in the way you do now. But you won't be allowed when she is bigger."

"I'm sure she is a very good little thing," remarked Mrs. Campeny, in a condescending tone, "though she is nothing like the size her father was at her age. You should have seen the legs he had!"

"Never mind," said Anne, good-temperedly; "I shouldn't care for Nancy to have legs quite like Joe when she grows up."

"I dare say she is very well, Mrs. Joe, dear; you see I never had experience with girls."

"I shall be glad when she gets old enough for you to talk of her as if she were a human creature and not a little pig," said Pamela. "Her temper is at least quite as remarkable as her arms and legs, but you never mention that. Why is it Nancy's cardinal virtue to be fat?"

"Pamela knows so much about babies since she is an aunt," laughed Anne.

It was an unwelcome moment when she had to put the little thing down and go back to the dim old house, where Richard Burnet was still poring hopelessly over his papers in the study, and his mother was sitting inactive in the parlor, droning out a lecture to Emilia over the fire. Emilia grew and blossomed in the dullness. She had a fine appetite, slept soundly at nights, and was very happy on the whole.

CHAPTER XXII.

"No fear!—or if a fear be born
This minute, it dies out in scorn.
Fear? I shall see her in three days
And one night, now the nights are short,
Then just two hours, and that is morn."

WHILE Pamela was plodding on in her round of monotonous duties, there were two people, living stirring and active lives in the busy world, whose hearts still turned to her faithfully, and who, among the multitude of their thoughts, ever kept her image as bright and as dearly cherished as ever.

George Lynton came home from his foreign rambles, and soon after went to Oxford. He paid a few short visits to Stourton, and always managed on these occasions to see Pamela at least once. As they seldom met more than twice during each stay he made at home, Mrs. Lynton made no objection, and concluded that his foolish fancy was dying a natural death as he grew older. At first he had made up his mind that it would be his privilege at least to worship Pamela in the far distance, perhaps at some time to smooth the path for her and for Harold. While his friend was away he would guard her for him. She should not be quite without a friend as long as he had occasional access to her; and the day might come when he could materially assist them both, and place within their reach that happiness which was unattainable for them now. He felt very strong and proud in his integrity, and in his faithfulness

to his friend. He thought when he had made up his mind to suffer loss in his own person he had anticipated the worst. Honor and the esteem of those he loved, these he told himself he could never fail of, and while they remained he could look life in the face bravely.

Meantime Harold was leading a very pleasant life abroad. After his year at Munich he was traveling about, seldom heard of—for he was the worst of correspondents—but writing now and then a hasty note to his mother and begging for news. Mrs. Turrell responded to this request by descanting on the severity of the weather, telling him Mrs. Campeny was laid up with bronchitis, or computing the rate of mortality among her broods of chickens during the past month. The good lady quite failed to understand that "news" meant news of Pamela Burnet, and no one else. One day there was a short passage in her letter which caused Harold a little tingle of surprise, which soon passed away. "Mr. George is back from college," she wrote. "He is for ever running over to Squire Burnet's and they say his mamma is much put out at it, not considering that sort of thing nice in a young gentleman like him, and no more do I."

Harold had been away from home about two years and a half when he received this letter. As he read it a great desire came over him to go back to Merehampstead. He looked out into the soft June air, and remembered how calm and bright the lowland sky would be on such a day, with great level bars of white stretching across the blue. He thought of the tall lilies that grew in the little walled garden at Rose Hall, and the stiff standard roses on either side of the path, and of Pamela's slim stately figure passing up and down; and for the first time a great home-sickness came over him. George too was there, and he had good reasons for wishing to see and thank the friend who had largely contributed to his successes, such as they had been. Harold's fortune seemed to be rising at last. George

had been the means of introducing him to an amateur musical society, which had been lately established by his friend and old school-fellow, Lord Dessington, and which was greatly in need of a rising young genius to take under its wing. The Dessingtonians had petted and made much of Harold. They had published some of his works at their own expense, and had even performed one of his concertos at their concerts;—and very badly they did it, as he informed the noble conductor with his customary frankness.

"It was very good of you all to work at it as you did, though," he allowed, "I must say I feel ashamed of my offspring. The instrumentation is wretchedly weak, and I don't think it could have been anything but a failure, even if the violins had not gone all wrong in the *andante*."

"Never mind, old boy," said Lord Dessington, slapping him on the back cheerfully. "We'll try the overture to Don Quixote on Wednesday, and I'll stake my head that goes all right."

But by the time Wednesday came Harold had given his patron the slip, and was on his way to Merehampstead.

How his heart rose as they left the narrow streets of Stratford behind them, and went bowling out into the open country. How dull and insensitive he had been all the time of his absence from Pamela. Now his eyes seemed freshly opened to the brightness of the sky, and the sweetness of the wayside flowers as they passed. Once when they changed horses, he got down and gathered a great spray of opal-tinted dog-roses. They were Pamela's favorite flowers, and always reminded him of her with their wild grace and delicate tints.

He slept that night at a quaint little manor-house near Colchester, where lived some friends whom he had met abroad, and whom he had promised to visit on the first opportunity. It was a night of sweet, hazy dreams and happy wakefulness. He watched the heavy

bunches of the cluster-roses stirring softly in the moonlight outside his window, and the stars shining through little feather-like clouds, and dropped into a half doze, only to be roused by the distant song of a nightingale, till at last with the dawn he fell into sounder sleep, and woke to find the sun high in the sky, shining in all his midsummer glory.

Presently he found himself once more on his journey. He had secured the box seat, and the driver was old Dickens, and there was so much news to hear, and so many questions to ask, that the mile-stones seemed to this one traveler at least, to fly past. Dickens was very communicative.

"Changes? Oh, yes, of course there had been changes in two year and a half, but nothing very particular either. Old Lord Lynton was nigh as hearty as ever. Mr. George looked delicate like. Folks said he and the old gentleman didn't get on together. Mr. Quicke wasn't at all the man he used to be, but Dickens believed him to be a match for most lawyers yet, notwithstanding. As for the Cartwrights, hadn't Mr. Harold heard what had happened to the Cartwrights?"

"I think I remember my mother said Mr. Cartwright had made a lot of money, and had turned his back on the bank," replied Harold; "but I dare say it wasn't such a great rise in the world as she thought."

Then Dickens told him a long and sufficiently melancholy story of how Mr. Cartwright had given up his share in the Merehampstead bank and embarked in some mercantile venture, which had brought him in a fabulous fortune at first, and had fully enabled him to gratify his wife's ambition to be a great lady as long as it lasted. They had gone to live in London, and wonderful stories had traveled down to their old home of the splendor of their establishment, and the greatness of their resources. Dickens could testify how he had himself seen Miss Julia riding in Hyde Park on a beautiful chestnut mare, the likes of which had never been

seen in the Stourton stables, even though the old Lord had had some pretty pieces of horseflesh in former days, too. The end of all this magnificence had been sudden ruin so complete as to give no hope of reparation. The unfortunate man was found dead in his bed soon after the blow fell. It was feared at first that he had laid violent hands on himself, "but I think it was his mind as gave way," said the old coachman, shaking his head sorrowfully, "and he went off in a fit like." He could tell nothing of what had happened to Julia and her mother. He did not think any one knew where they were living —not any one in Mere, at least.

This was the first cloud on Harold's home-coming. His heart felt very sore for his little playfellow, who, he reflected, must be a young woman of seventeen now, with all her prospects for life shattered, just as she was growing up. He sat sad and silent, watching the hedges go by, without even heart to direct Dickens's flood of gossip in the direction of Rose Hall.

"They *du* say Mr. George tried to find out Miss July and her mother when first the bad news came. But it all ended in talk. Young gentlemen have their own selves to manage for, and that's more nor they can always du, I fancy," said the old man, with a wink that implied that he could impart most important secrets to Harold about his friend's doings, if he liked.

"What do you mean?" said Harold.

"Well, shewerly yew know, Master Harold, being connected like with the family."

"What family?"

"Well, Miss Pamela be Mrs. Joe's sister, and that is as good as your own cousin, ain't it? She is a fine lass. Not that any of us thought to see her the lady of Stourton either. They have always married into county families, have the Lyntons, and mostly titled folks like themselves. They du say the old Lord is set dead agen it, and Mrs. Lynton too, but lor', I shouldn't wonder if the young'uns get their own way, all said and done."

"What tomfoolery you are talking, Dickens. Miss Pamela Burnet marry a school-boy like George Lynton, indeed! I suppose it is that you are driving at, and I'll tell you what,—you may tell the Mere folks one and all, if they can't keep their tongues from fouling that lady's name in future, they will find themselves with their heads punched, be they many or few."

"No one went for to foul her name," began Dickens, sulkily.

"They had better leave her name alone altogether then, and you too, Dickens," said the young man between his teeth. "The story about George Lynton is a d——d lie."

He leaned back in his seat and took refuge in sullen silence. He did not believe one word of the story; but why was George so careless as to give any opening for the Merehampstead gossips, to allow her name to be bandied about with coarse jokes by people who did not know her, and who perhaps never could know her goodness and purity? He felt glad now that he had fixed no certain date for his arrival, for there would be no gig waiting for him in Merehampstead, and he would be free to go home by any route he liked. He would certainly go straight to Rose Hall, sending his luggage on to his mother's house. He knew there would be no peace for him till he had seen Pamela and touched her hand, till he had the assurance of her tell-tale eyes and clinging fingers to calm his restless heart.

He made his peace with Dickens, and the two shook hands very heartily when they parted company at the "Dragon."

"Come up to the Little Farm while I'm at home," said Harold, "and we'll have a glass of ale together; and tell your old woman I'll be sure and come to her for a cup of tea before I go."

"Poor unlucky young fellar," mused Dickens, as he watched him down the street; "shewer enough he has come home to a disappointment. And how he fired up

at my speaking of her! I am afraid she is an unthankful young hussy for all her pretty face."

But Harold was walking on in the glowing evening, his eyes wet with happy tears, and his heart beating high with hope.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"If he could know, if he could know,
What love, what love, his love should be!"

THEY were hay-making at Rose Hall, and Anne had come over to spend the day, bringing little Nancy with her. Mrs. Long was there also, enjoying a summer holiday, and the sweet smell of the hay. Towards evening, she was hovering about between the home-meadow and the open door of the walled garden; the sisters were busy with their long rakes, scattering the grass in the air, and chatting merrily over their work. The maids were all out of doors helping, and even Mrs. Burnet had had her arm-chair carried into the garden, that she might see what was going on.

Mrs. Long was strolling up and down between the rose trees when she heard the unwonted sound of the rusty old knocker, and she it was who opened the door to admit Harold Turrell. She felt a little afraid of him at the first glance; he had grown so broad and manly-looking since they last met; his fair hair was blowing about his face in the draught of the open door, and his eyes looked eager and determined; but she quickly collected her forces, and asked him to step into the parlor in her usual pleasant tones.

"The girls are out in the meadow hay-making," she said. "They will be so pleased to see you, but now I have you here, you must tell me a little news first. I *am so* longing to hear how you have been getting on. *We are* going to be very proud of you, you know, Mr.

Turrell. You are our first genius, and when you have made a name, all the good folks of Merehampstead will have something to boast of."

It was in vain Harold tried to get out into the meadow. She had a stream of small talk and questions to pour forth, and would neither send for Pamela nor let him escape. At last he saw he must take the matter into his own hands. To be kept there listening to Mrs. Long's chatter, with Pamela only a few steps from him, was too unbearable. He got up and made a move to the door.

"Don't hurry off," cried Mrs. Long. "You have told me all your news very nicely, but you haven't listened to mine."

"I should like to go out and speak to Miss Pamela," he said, with his hand on the door, "and my time is short."

"Ah! it is about our dear girl I want to tell you some news."

"Indeed!"

Mrs. Long looked down and fingered her watch chain. "Do you ever hear from your friend, Mr. George Lynton, now?" she asked, in a low voice.

"No, I don't," replied Harold, almost beside himself with vexation.

"And you were such friends! Now, really, did he drop the correspondence? I'm sure you won't mind my asking."

"I was lazy, and didn't answer his letters. I suppose he got tired of writing. It is hardly fair to say he dropped it. And now, Mrs. Long, I think I'll go out."

"One moment, Mr. Turrell, I assure you it is for your own sake I detain you. I thought you would have heard from your friend all I have to tell you."

"What do you mean?" said Harold, rearing himself against the door, and shaking back his hair.

"You used to be fond of Pamela when you were *both quite young*—boy and girl together, I may say;

and I can't help telling you of her good fortune, though nothing is settled quite yet, and I am trusting to you to be discreet and not let out a word, particularly if Mr. George has not told you. Of course, he wishes to arrange everything so that there may not be any clashing with his family. Not but what he is his own master, or, at least, will be in a few months; but I am sure we don't want to have any disagreeables with Mrs. Lynton; so we only treat him just as a friend, and there is no formal engagement between the two, though any one can see with half an eye how much they are attached to one another. I thought, as an old friend of the family, I'd better tell you, Mr. Turrell. It is as well young gentlemen should know when young ladies are bespoke, you know," she added, with a sickly smile.

"You don't mean to tell me that Pamela is in love with George Lynton—a boy younger than herself. There are bounds even to my credulity, Mrs. Long!"

"Only two years younger," she said, gently. And then she came and laid her hand on his, and looked at him with such kind, womanly eyes that he could not quite disbelieve her, and felt his heart really quake for the first time. "My dear Mr. Harold," she said, "I am afraid you were more fond of my niece at one time than you should have been, and she thought more than we liked about you; but you know it could never come to anything, and, with her at least, it has proved but a passing fancy. We are expecting Mr. Lynton here this evening, and when you have once seen them together you will believe what I see no words of mine will ever persuade you of. Why should you not be glad that your two friends should be happy together? In spite of their difference of position they are admirably suited, and Pamela is fitted to be a rich man's wife. I am sorry to hurt you, but is it not better to tell you all at once? If you do not believe me, you may ask any one round about. Though there is no acknowledged engagement, every one knows of the attachment, and will tell you

of George's devotion. Ah! Mr. Harold, there are troubles connected with all this grandeur. Perhaps it would have been better if she had loved some one in her own station of life. I am sure if your circumstances had been better, we would have gladly given her to you three years ago;" and Mrs. Long wiped some very sincere tears out of her eyes.

"You are asking me to believe that the two persons I believe the best in the world are false," he said, looking her searchingly in the face.

"Why false? You never showed more than common friendship for Pamela. I am sure George never dreamed that you had any other feeling."

"And she?"

"A fine-feeling girl is the last person to find out that a man is in love with her. You never spoke to her, did you?" she asked, sharply.

"No," said Harold, clenching his fist in an agony of regret; "I was afraid of making her miserable, and I thought she would remember me."

"You have behaved very honorably, and have probably saved her and yourself much unhappiness," said Mrs. Long. "I can't tell you how sorry I feel for you, dear Mr. Harold."

She was really a soft-hearted woman, and when she saw him sit down despairingly and hide his white face in his hands, she brought out her pocket-handkerchief, and cried over him quite as copiously as if it had not been her own hands that had sent his fair castle of hopes tumbling about his ears. She felt quite sure of George's devotion to Pamela, and was certain that all would be well between them if only Harold could be kept out of the way.

Perhaps she had gone a little too far in assuring him that the affection was mutual; but Pamela was so close, and really no one could prove from her conduct that she was not off with the old love, and on with the new. Surely, Mrs. Long thought, she was at liberty to con-

sider that as the state of things, when circumstances demanded that she should act promptly.

"I am sure I hope you will be comforted in time," she said, as she saw him off from the door-step, "and that you won't think unkindly of me because I have been forced to be the bearer of evil tidings."

But he seemed to take no notice of her words, and walked slowly down towards the gate, only lifting his hat to her mechanically as he went. Once outside the great gateway, a sickening desire came over him to get back, to see her once more, even if she had been false to him. He had thought so longingly of the first moment of seeing her, the thrill of her touch, the first sound of her voice! If she would give him one happy moment it would be a little payment, a drop in the great ocean of love which she owed him, and would never pay. He could not go back again to the house and face Mrs. Long, but he would skirt round the home-meadow where she had said they were, and come upon her unawares. He crept along the fields, bent and weary like an old man, and when he got round to the middle of the back of the house, he knelt down and looked through an opening in the palings. This was what he saw.

It was a still, luminous twilight, such as only belongs to midsummer weather. Just over the trees, on the right side of the house, hung the great, newly risen moon, in a sky so clear that it seemed neither to require nor receive any light but its own. The hay-cocks looked white and dewy on the green of the newly cut grass. Through the open garden door he could see the stiff rows of roses, and beyond them the mellow brick-work of the old house. The three sisters had paused in their work, but seemed loath to part with their long rakes. Anne, grown handsome and matronly, stood shouldering hers; Emilia's was half dropping from her languid fingers. In the centre stood Pamela, with little Nancy in her arms. She had a quaint patterned lilac cotton gown on, and a dusky red ribbon threading through her

hair. She looked a little thinner and graver than when he had parted from her at Mrs Long's door, and there was a wistful listening look on her face, as if she were always watching for something which did not come. It was not the face of a woman who could forget; as he looked at her, a thousand memories rushed into his heart of the old days, and gave the lie to Mrs. Long's story. He thought of the time when he had found her in the dusk in Merehampstead church, of their parting in the boat-house, and their last meeting in London. Surely she had loved him then, though there had been no spoken words between them, and if she had loved him once, then she loved him for ever; there was no changefulness written on that broad, steadfast brow, and those lips a little compressed with quiet patience. No wonder she had grown heart-sick waiting for him through those weary years, he thought, with a glow of love and pity. Even now she was waiting—surely it was for him. There was the sharp ring of a horse's hoofs on the road outside; in the clear, gray light he could see her face change, the brows unbend, the lips relax into the softer lines of hope. She listened a moment, then set little Nancy gently down, and went away through the open door, and up the garden path.

"It is Mr. George," said Emilia, breaking the spell of silence at last. "We may as well put by the things, she won't come out any more," and she began collecting the hay-rakes.

Anne made a little gesture of impatience. "Come, Nancy darling," she said, "auntie has run away, and it is time for little girls to go home to bed."

As they went in they met Pamela and George Lynton on the door-steps.

"Mrs. Joe," said the latter, as he shook hands, "your cousin Harold has arrived. I have just seen little Bill Dickens, and he says he came down with his father to-night by the mail. How glad we shall all be to see *him*."

He forbore any glance at Pamela, but Anne looked at her for a moment. The light, which had faded from her face when George and she had met, sprang up brighter than ever. At last—at last he was really come; in a day or two at latest she must see him; he might be ever so near at that moment. He was nearer than she thought, but was walking breathlessly across the dewy fields, he scarcely knew whither, only longing to get away from her presence—from her memory, alas! there was no escape.

At last he stumbled upon the turnpike road; then he turned round and saw Merehampstead behind him. The tall church tower rose against the faint glow which still lingered in the west, the moonlight caught on the slated roofs here and there, and lost itself in the light mist wreaths that floated up from the marshes. Everything was so still about him that he could hear the faint hum from the distant town, and the voices of children from the cottages under the church cliff piercing the air now and then. He turned his back upon it with a muttered curse, and walked on eastwards.

His thoughts grew calmer as he went; he was determined even then to do no injustice to the woman he had loved, or the friend he had liked. That he might have won her love once he felt sure: all of the sweet looks which he had seen her wear for George to-night, she had worn for him in those old days when George was nothing but a precocious, sentimental school-boy. But a woman's affection proved a slighter thing than he had thought, silence and absence together were more than it could bear; a word from her then would have chained her to him for ever, but she was not, as he had fondly thought, strong enough to be true to him without that word. George, with his winning ways and handsome face, close at hand, became more to her than a greater love which she could neither see nor hear; his honorable silence, his patience and tenderness, were all a mistake; if he had fallen at her feet and flung his arms

around her in the first moment of passion, she would have been his—but would she have been worth the gaining on such terms? He told himself no, a thousand times; neither she nor anything in the world seemed worth his taking now. The fairest fruit of all had turned to ashes between his teeth, he would as soon as not fling all the rest after it. His very goodness and self-denial turned round to make a mock at him, for had they not led him like will-o'-the-wisps into this slough of despond? His art hid her head: she had no consolation to give. Was she not a plaything for fine dilettante young gentlemen like George, who, when they were tired of such innocent diversion, would turn to deadlier pleasures, and drink the heart's blood of poorer men like water?

There is some suffering which, as far as human wisdom can see, has no outcome in good, which makes us sadder but not wiser, which rends the heart with wounds for which no balm is ever found in this life. Harold's sorrow was of that kind. It wrought great changes in him, and at the end of that short midsummer night, when he stood weary and footsore in the streets of a town, he looked at the reddening east with hard, defiant eyes, and told himself his old life had passed away from him for ever, and at least he could see the world now, free from glamour such as had gilded all material things in old days.

He had wandered all the way to Beckermouth, and between the narrow rows of houses he could see the far-stretching gray sea, quivering under the dawn. Nature had often told him of rest and hope, and joy coming after sorrow, and he had listened and taken comfort. What false comfort it had been. He was wiser now, he thought, as he turned away and walked down the silent street to the inn, where in time he succeeded in rousing a sleepy servant-maid, and getting shown to a room.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Only, for man, how bitter not to grave
On his soul's hand's palms one fair, good, wise thing
Just as he grasped it! For himself death's wave
While time first washes—ah, the sting!—
O'er all he'd sink to save."

HAROLD'S sudden disappearance caused no little surprise in Merehampstead. Mrs. Turrell, fortunately, did not know of his arrival till the next morning, when the boy came over from the "Dragon" bringing his boxes. Almost at the same time, a messenger appeared from Beckermouth, with a letter to request that the things might be sent on to him there, and adding that he should not be in Merehampstead for some time, at all events. The letter was extremely vague, and gave no reasons for his sudden change of plans.

"Did you ever know such a boy," exclaimed Mrs. Turrell; "and his room ready and everything, and the chicken pie baked just as he likes it. Not that we never eat pastry and such stuff, I'm sure!"

"It is strange, certainly," said Mrs. Campeny, turning the letter up and down, and examining the corners, lest any undiscovered information should lurk somewhere concealed.

"I don't think he has any right to keep folks on pins and needles in that way," said Anne, who had looked in to hear the news. She remembered Pamela's anxious face, and felt indignant.

"Well, don't begin to pick holes in his doings till you *know the* cause," put in his mother. "May be he has

gone to see some of his quality friends; it is not like Harold to go running all over the country without any why or wherefore."

In the afternoon George called to make inquiries. He was much surprised to find that his friend had given no reason for his non-appearance, and like Anne, he felt even more angry than astonished. He longed to go and cheer up Pamela, and make these days of waiting less tedious to her, but he was not sure that she had heard of Harold's disappearance, and he could not bear to be the first to carry the evil tidings to her. He was more puzzled and pained than he liked to own even to himself, and shut himself up in the music-room when he got home, and tried to draw some consolation from his organ.

Of course the news soon traveled to Rose Hall, and Pamela learned how her friend's visit, so long expected, had ended suddenly and mysteriously. But she was not the only member of the family disquieted by the intelligence. To do Mrs. Long justice, she was very unhappy at the state of things her interference had brought about, and she was many times on the verge of confessing what a hand she had had in getting Harold out of Merehampstead. But confession becomes difficult when delayed; no one had any idea of Harold's visit, and she could not give the slightest hint of what had happened without making an enormous sensation among her neighbors, as well as within the Rose Hall party. Furthermore, Pamela's looks frightened her. The girl went about the house with a face so drawn and altered by the pain of a few days, that her aunt could no longer justify to herself the story she had told of her faithlessness. Pamela bore her suffering silently and bravely; but the wolf was there, gnawing at her heart all the time, and leaving, day by day, deeper traces of its presence. Why was she so reticent before, Mrs. Long asked herself, if she cared so much about it? After all, she had done what was best, *and it would all* come right in the end, when Pamela

was Lady Lynton of Stourton. In the meantime, it was better to say nothing of the interview with Harold; it would most likely come out some day, when all danger was over, and it would not matter. However, Mrs. Long was not sorry to be making her preparations to leave for home, for Rose Hall was getting a dismal house, and conscience pricked sharply sometimes. Emilia was going up to town with her aunt, and was as gay as a bird until this cloud descended over the house, and enveloped even her.

"You do look so wretched, Pamela," she said to her sister one morning, as she was folding her dresses, ready to pack. "Is it that you have got the headache or what? Are you thinking how dull it will be when Aunt Carry and I are gone? because I am sure I would rather stop at home for ever than see you look as you do sometimes now."

"I'm very glad you should go, my dear little sister, and I'm not wretched at all, only rather out of sorts, I think."

"I'm sure you ought to be happy if any one ought; I heard Aunt Carry saying last night, it isn't many girls have such luck as you have."

"Don't listen to everything Aunt Carry says, Emilia, she doesn't always mean it."

"Well, she said last night to grannie that you might marry George Lynton, if you liked to hold up your finger," said Emilia, nodding her head knowingly. "And I believe that, for I heard Peggy saying the same thing to old Jones, over at Anne's one day."

"They have no right to use my name or his in such a way," said Pamela, flushing. "It is pardonable in the servants, who are gossips by nature, but as for Aunt Carry, it is downright wicked of her. I suppose she wants to take away the only friend I have left."

"I think it is wicked of you to talk like that," rejoined Emilia, wiping her eyes, "when you have two sisters who love you, not to speak of any one else. And why

shouldn't you marry George Lynton, pray? I am sure he is fond enough of you, always coming after you as he is."

"I have very good reasons of my own, but I think it ought to be enough for my friends that I could not be looked upon as anything but an interloper in such a family as the Lyntons. Do you think I should submit to that?"

"They couldn't look upon you as anything but Mrs. Lynton of Stourton, once you were married," remarked Emilia, with considerable acuteness.

"Come, fold up your dresses, child, and talk no more folly. That title of honor will never be mine, so set your mind at rest. If you hear Peggy chattering any more, tell her to hold her tongue; Aunt Carry, I suppose, can't be settled so easily; above all, don't you go setting such ideas floating. Mr. George is very kind to me, and I don't want to have him forbidden the house."

In spite of her boast, Pamela felt dull and lonely when she was left alone in the house with her father and grandmother. It seemed like a foretaste of what all her future life was to be; she, who was to be left behind while the stream of events flowed on, bringing joys and sorrows, difficulties and victories to others, but nothing to her but a share in other people's lives, the privilege of rejoicing at other people's weddings, and caressing other people's children.

"Well, Pamela," said Mrs. Burnet, the first morning they were alone, "I am sure I hope Emilia will do better for herself than you have done. I never had the advantages you have had when I was a girl, and you seem like to be an old maid after all. After your visits to London too, and seeing so many folks, and here you are going a-begging still, and nigh upon three-and-twenty!"

"I'm not going a-begging, thank you, grandmother. I suppose there must be one old maid in the family. I'll *stop at home,* and take care of you and father."

"I don't fancy you'll be troubled with me long, and I make no doubt but your father would sooner see you settled in a home of your own, particularly when he can't leave you well—far from it."

"Never mind, mother," said Richard, flinching at the allusion; "she will be provided for; we don't know what good fortune there is in store for her yet;" and he patted his daughter's head hopefully as he passed out of the room. He was thinking of his literary earnings that never came, but there was something of prophecy in the words for all that.

Pamela saw nothing of George Lynton for some time after her aunt left. His whole relations to her were upset by Harold's conduct, and he scarcely dared to trust himself in her presence until things were made clearer to him. His first feelings of bewilderment had given way to those of anger and indignation, when weeks passed and no explanation came from his friend, till at length the climax was put to these feelings by a letter from Lord Dessington, which seemed to throw some light upon Harold's behavior.

"I never knew such an uncertain fellow as Turrell," he wrote. "Just as we were in the midst of rehearsing an overture of his for the concert on the 20th of last month, he vanished, and we had to re-cast our whole programme at the last moment. I know he is in town now, for I passed him at Knightsbridge the other day, walking with a buxom, rosy-cheeked young woman. He seemed offended at my taking a curious look at the lady; in fact, I felt inquisitive to know who his friend was, for I had seen her before. Where, you ask? At Drury Lane, my dear boy, gracefully attired in spangles and gauze, and not much of that. He has never appeared at Hanover Square and I fancy he means to have no more to do with us, so don't think I have been lukewarm to your *protégé*, my dear Lynton, for I would have been his friend if I could."

The next day George rode over to Rose Hall. All

obligations to Harold were at an end now; if he could win Pamela's love, he told himself, he might still save her. But he started on his wooing with a heavy heart. There was an atmosphere of falsehood, treachery, impurity, pressing even round the woman he loved; he would have given not only his own hopes of success, but everything he possessed in the world, to have brought back his old happy faith in his friend,—to have been able to put Harold's hand in hers, and feel that it was not unworthy to touch her palm.

He found her at work in the little walled garden. Her face was worn and sad looking, though it was a little flushed with exercise. She was quite touchingly glad to see him; indeed, the tears rose to her eyes as she held out her hands to greet him; but this passed away in a few moments, and she became unusually silent and constrained. Emilia's foolish gossip would keep ringing in her head; besides, George's manner had undergone more change than he was aware of; he had meant to keep to his old friendly, almost brotherly, bearing, but the attempt was scarcely successful and Pamela's newly developed consciousness exaggerated every shade of difference. It was a trying time to her, but to him it seemed full of subdued hope. Her first happy love he could never have, but was there nothing to come after that? Surely a heart so great and true could find in time some little gift to bestow upon such devotion as his. There must always be a want in such a union he knew —neither his life nor hers could ever be full and perfect but he would do his best to gather up such fragments of happiness as remained to them, to preserve her beautiful nature from utter ruin and loss. He told himself he would be content with such little kindness as she could give him, if only she would consent to take of his best, to let him spend and be spent for her; that was all that was left him to desire.

The same summer sun that looked down upon the two *young people* in the garden was also shining

brightly into Mr. Quicke's shabby parlor, making the dust on the furniture look like golden powder, and giving rise to dreadful reflections in Mrs. Campeny's mind as to the iniquities of bachelor's housemaids. The old woman in her neat gingham gown, sat looking the personification of freshness and neatness, and quite illuminating the dingy room, though there was an unusual cloud of trouble on her brow. Mr. Quicke was holding an open letter in his hand, his eyebrows worked up and down as he read, and his lips screwed themselves into a variety of grimaces, highly expressive of vexation and disgust. It seemed as if he could hardly credit what he read, for he turned back and back again to the beginning of the letter, and went through it more carefully every time. This was how the epistle ran:

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"I had moved from my old lodgings and only got your letter last week. I am sorry my sudden change of plans disturbed you so much: there is no use in explaining, but I had good reasons for my movements, though they were sudden. For the present I cannot come to Merehampstead. I came across an old kind friend the other day, to whom I have been able to be of some use, and as long as I can assist her I cannot leave London. It is poor Julia Cartwright. I met her in the street one night, an orphan, completely unprotected, and very poor; she had been gaining her living in the only honest way she knew of or could take to: acting little parts at one of the theatres. Please do not mention this to the scandal-loving folks of Mere. I will take care she does not fall back into such a life; she is a good-hearted girl, and more faithful to her friends in her adversity than the more prosperous are. Her mother has been dead about two months, she says. Please keep all this to yourself, for Julia's sake, and believe me, your dutiful son,

"HAROLD TURRELL."

"Why the deuce can't he alloy his benevolence with a little common sense," said Mr. Quicke, as he threw down the letter. "Pretty things people will say of the girl!"

"He was always so rash and hasty," said Mrs. Campeny, "and kind-hearted to a fault, poor fellow. He has had something to upset him, depend upon it; it is not like him to write to his mother in that short, hard sort of way."

"And what did he want to fly off at a tangent like that for, when he came down in June, and he won't even explain?"

"And I don't pretend to, either; but he had a reason, or thought he had, I'll be bound."

"Well that isn't saying much for him, but you always stood his friend, Mrs. Campeny."

"Yes," answered the old woman, "and so I always will. And Julia Cartwright's too, if needs be."

"She will want friends, as far as I can see, particularly female ones: excuse me for saying so: if this state of things goes on. And what do you mean to do?"

"I have been persuading Mrs. Turrell to write to him to send her down here. It is better we should take care of her than he. She wouldn't hear of it at first, but she seems inclined to give in now, and at last she said she would abide by your opinion, sir, so I just came over to ask."

"You have been as wise as you always are, Mrs. Campeny; perhaps I had better write her a line if you don't mind waiting. I shall tell her I think she can't do better than send for the girl—poor thing."

He looked up presently from the writing-table, and gave a keen glance at his visitor.

"How old should you say she is now?" he asked.

"Julia Cartwright? Oh, between seventeen and eighteen."

"Perhaps he means to marry her?"

"Perhaps, *sir*."

"Come, Mrs. Campeny, you may as well tell me all you know: didn't he look higher than Julia Cartwright, once upon a time?"

"Well, yes, I can't say but it was looking higher."

"There is no need to discuss that," said the old man, waving his delicate little hand contemptuously. "He has had a chance that should have fallen to a worthier man: that is all I can say."

"It is hard to judge without knowing more, sir."

"I don't know how you reconcile facts with your belief in him, Mrs. Campeny. I suppose he has the blessed illogical mind of woman to thank for it."

"I don't reconcile it, as you call it, Mr. Quicke. I just let it alone."

"And you believe in him in spite of appearances?"

"I'm a foolish old woman, I suppose," said Mrs. Campeny, rising and gathering her shawl round her. "And I do believe, in spite of it all, that he is a good noble-minded young man, and that there is something more at the bottom of his vagaries than you or I know of. If it was all quite clear to everybody there wouldn't be any call to 'believe' about it at all, I suppose. And now I'll say good day, Mr. Quicke, and thank you kindly for the letter."

"True to your sex you have had the last word, and I'm afraid the best one, too," said the old lawyer, as his visitor moved to the door. "Let me know if any more news comes, or if I can help in the arrangements about Julia."

So it came about that Pamela heard nothing of Harold's doings, and the suspicions which his best friend cherished about him, and, as time went on, some little hope began once more to spring up in her mind that perhaps he was not quite indifferent to her after all. He might have had reasons for his sudden departure which she knew nothing of, and like Mrs. Campeny she was ready to believe in him blindly, as long as she could. Having once repented of her lack of faith, she

was not long in going to the other extreme of self-reproach, and at last came to the conclusion that she had shown herself quite unworthy of Harold's love, by her foolish fears, and that, if he had really forgotten her, it would have been scarcely more than she had deserved. Having reached this depth of humiliation, her spirits began to rise rapidly. The color came back to her lips, the light to her eyes, and George, who had hoped to comfort her in her dispair, was fairly broken down at the sight of her vain hopefulness, and banished himself from her presence altogether. He cursed Harold in his heart, and cursed his own folly for having trusted him and allowing Pamela to drift on to this wreck and ruin. It was too late for any rescue now; he could only sit by helplessly, with rage and despair in his heart, till the end came.

It came one sunny July afternoon. She had some little commission to do at Mrs. Turrell's, and an hour or so before tea-time she took her marketing basket in her hand, and set out across the fields.

"I will come and fetch you after tea," said her father, as he opened the door of the home meadow for her.

"Oh, father! but who will butter your toast for you at that rate?" she asked, gayly.

"We'll take care of one another, child. Don't hurry back. Quicke says I shut you up too much in this dull house; I don't want to make an old woman of you before the time."

There had been a heavy fall of rain in the early morning, and everything was sweet and fresh; she went cheerily through the fields of springing green corn, singing softly to herself, and swinging her basket in time with the tune. She was not an old woman yet, at all events; there was time for her to be sorry, if needs be, but glad in the end. The end—that was the great thing; the present could be borne with, so long as a glorious some-day shone in the far distance. And so she went on, taking comfort to herself, till she walked

up through the prim privet hedges to Mrs. Turrell's open door, and then, seeing no one about, went right into the sitting-room. She found Mrs. Turrell all alone. She was sitting in her large horse-hair arm-chair, with some letters in her lap, and a damp looking pocket handkerchief held to her eyes. Her collar had come unpinned, and the violence of her distress seemed to have had a curious effect in screwing her cap to one side and roughing her blond hair.

Pamela ran to her in alarm, knelt down by her side, and threw her arms round her waist. "Oh, what is the matter," she cried, "dear Mrs. Turrell, do tell me if you can."

"I've had such bad news. I do wish Mrs. Campeny were at home," she sobbed in reply, "these things always come when one is alone: she would tell me what to do, but she is gone into town, you know, and then I'm afraid she'll go in to Anne's to tea."

"Never mind, you shan't be alone. I'll stay and keep you company till she comes back. If it is anything you can't tell me," added the girl with a blush, "I can just sit with you, and be a little company, mayn't I?"

"Yes, dear; such a good, kind girl you are! I don't see any reason why I shouldn't tell you all about it. Of course you must know—everybody will know in a few days!" she added, with a fresh burst of tears.

Pamela's face grew white with terror. "I wish you would fold up the letters," she said, drawing back, "I can scarcely help seeing the writing—it is your son's. I could not help seeing that at the first glance, Mrs. Turrell, so I ought to tell you. There is one thing I cannot do any harm by asking, at any rate—he is not ill, is he?"

"No, no," cried the poor woman, rocking herself to and fro, "he's not ill, but oh, Pamela! he has gone and disgraced himself so, and my family that were always so respectable, and so looked up to. He was always

a bit wild, was Harold, but I couldn't have believed it of him, that I'm sure I couldn't, not if an angel had spoken it of my own child."

"I think there must be some mistake about it," said Pamela. "If it is not wrong to tell me what it is he has done, perhaps I could help you to find out."

"I don't see any harm in telling you now. It is not nice to tell young women all the wickedness of the world, but ah! they'll find it out soon enough for themselves. And this can't be a secret for long; and you and he were always friends, weren't you?"

Pamela felt her strength altogether failing her in this horrible uncertainty: "Oh! let me see the letters and have done with it!" she cried, in the sharp accents of unbearable pain, and Mrs. Turrell, half frightened, yet half relieved to have some one to share her trouble, put the two packets into her hands.

She had often dreamed of the days when Harold would write to her, but now for the first time she really held a letter of his in her hand. She felt a thrill of happy emotion through all her dread as her eyes met the large, untidy writing which she was familiar with on his manuscripts. Naturally enough she read the last letter first; the other was the one which had been previously shown to Mr. Quicke.

"Dear Mother," Harold wrote, "Your offers for Julia are very kind, but no longer needed. I soon began to experience the evils you allude to. Julia is as innocent and ignorant as a child, but that did not prevent some of my friends from staring at her impertinently in the street, and my female neighbors from applying titles to her which I will not repeat. I was bound to save her from this,—it was the fault of my own carelessness and folly. The slander is done with now, at any rate. We were married the day before yesterday, and there is no more to be said about it. She is very affectionate and good, poor little soul! I

only wish Heaven had sent her a better husband. I would send her to see you, but traveling is expensive and we are poor folks. By the way, I have changed my profession now I am a married man. I hope trade may be kinder to me than art has been. It is no use giving up everything for a thankless mistress, is it?

"Ever your dutiful son,

"H. T."

A perfect sense of unreality supported Pamela as she read this; then she turned back to the first letter, and went slowly and carefully through that. At last her mind seemed to struggle through the clouds of bewilderment that enveloped it. "Harold is married—Harold is married," she thought over to herself, like a child learning a lesson. She sat on the hearth-rug, quite motionless and silent, and watched a fly crawling over the papers in her lap, till at last she became conscious that Mrs. Turrell was watching her from behind the corner of her pocket-handkerchief. She folded up the letters and gave them back. "It is very sudden," was all she said.

"It is like enough to break my heart, I know," replied the mother, relapsing into sobs.

"I don't see why it should do that," said Pamela, rising to her feet; "surely it was good of him to succor the poor girl in her want; and he had a right to marry her if he liked. There is nothing dishonorable about it."

"But to pick up the creature in the streets like that; you don't know the world, child. And an actress too, everybody knows what they are."

"I dare say they are very good, many of them, and I am sure poor Julia was. I used to think I should like to be an actress myself, once upon a time," said Pamela, with a little wintry smile.

"And a silly child you were then. No; I can never feel any confidence in her after she has led such a life. To think folks should be able to say, 'her son married

with a play-acting woman'—no, Pamela, I shall never hold my head up again,—never. It is a disgrace to the family."

"At any rate, she was not acting long," answered Pamela, "and no one need know anything about it unless you tell them. Poor Julia was always very warm-hearted and affectionate, and surely you cannot believe that Harold would have married her unless she had been, as he says, quite good and innocent. You ought to believe in your own son," added the girl, with her eyes sparkling, "and not want me to remind you—I, who am not even his sister, why should I have to plead for him to his own mother?"

"You are a dear, blessed girl to speak up for my poor boy," cried Mrs. Turrell, flinging her arms round Pamela's neck, "and I love you for it. After all, perhaps, if we keep it quiet nobody may ever know more about it than that she was Cartwright's daughter at the bank, and they were highly respectable folks till he took to getting so rich all of a sudden."

Pamela disengaged herself from her friend's embrace. "I am glad you seem a little comforted; and now, if you won't think me unkind, I'll be getting home. Father likes me to be in for tea," she said, dreamily.

Just as she started on her homeward walk Mrs. Campeny drove up in Joe's gig. Pamela hastened on into the fields, and escaped before any eyes more observant than Mrs. Turrell's had had a chance of remarking on her white face.

"And so you told Pamela?" said Mrs. Campeny, when she had heard the great news.

"Yes—well—I did," answered Mrs. Turrell, shuffling from one foot to another. "There was no harm, was there, now they are married?"

"No; I suppose she might as well know now as any time. And how did she take it?"

"Oh, she said her best to comfort me in her way, poor child. But what can she know about it? We ever

she has grown-up sons, and sees them going on a wrong, then will be her time. It is easy preaching pa tience for them that ain't hurt."

"Poor Pamela!" said Mrs. Campeny, softly, "she de serves never to be hurt."

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CHAPTER XXV.

"His palms are folded on his breast;
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest."

PAMELA'S courage, which had dwindled to its lowest point during the time of suspense, rose rapidly when once she learned the extent of her misfortune. Her angry contempt for herself helped to carry her through the first days, while as yet no one at Rose Hall knew what had happened, and she was at least spared any remarks on Harold's conduct. But when the first shock was over, a time of reaction came. She could not so suddenly bend all her thoughts in a new direction, or forget at her will the hopes she had renounced. In spite of all her fierce battles with herself, and all her pride and determination, soft thoughts of her old love would creep back into her heart sometimes. She woke in the morning with his vision before her eyes, she still heard his voice echoing through her dreams, and found his name rising unawares to her lips when she prayed. She shed bitter tears over her own weakness; he was utterly indifferent to her, it seemed, yet she could not free herself from the thought of him; she called herself unmaidenly and foolish, but the hard names had only power to sting and none to help.

A week of this conflict had wrought her up to a state of restlessness which seemed to be rapidly approaching the unendurable, when the news, which had certainly not traveled as quickly as bad news is generally sup-

posed to do, reached Mrs. Burnet. It was some relief to Pamela to hear the the matter openly commented upon; though, as may be supposed, her grandmother did not do so in the most charitable spirit.

"Here is a pretty story Peggy has just picked up!" she began, as her granddaughter sat down to her sewing one afternoon. "Here is Master Harold Turrell gone and got married all of a sudden up in London to nobody knows who, and never given his own mother so much as a hint of it beforehand!"

"Peggy has not picked up quite the right story, I am afraid," said Pamela.

"What do you know about it, pray?" asked the old woman, adjusting her spectacles to take a good look at her grandchild.

"I know that he is married to Julia, poor Mrs. Cartwright's daughter; he met her in London, and seems to have arranged it all very hastily, but it is scarcely correct to say that Mrs. Turrell had not a hint of it beforehand. At least, she knew all there was to know, I fancy."

"And why on earth have you been keeping your tongue between your teeth all this time, if you knew about it? Are you bound over to keep the Turrell's secrets, pray? I don't think it becoming in you, Pamela."

"I had no wish to keep secrets, but I did not know whether Mrs. Turrell would not rather tell people about it herself. I don't think she would have mentioned it to me, but I found her alone when she had just got the news, and was in trouble about it, so it all came out on the spot. I am very glad you know, at any rate, grandmother, for I hate mysteries, I'm sure."

"Trouble, indeed! What could she expect from such a son as that? She ought to be thankful that he is honorably married, and things are no worse! I should like to know what they mean to live on. Cartwright wasn't worth a brass farthing when he died, folks say. And

as for Harold, he has neither money nor the wit to win it. Of course, there will be a parcel of brats come along to help 'em to starve. I've no patience with such folly."

Pamela escaped as soon as she could, and slipped away to her own room, hers only now, and very lonely with both the sisters gone from it. It was a cloudless, sultry summer day, the corn was beginning to whiten under the fierce sun, and the air seemed to quiver with heat. Pamela felt as if she could not breathe in the house. She tied on her shady sun-bonnet and went down-stairs; to toil across the scorching fields to the Abbey would be better than this, she thought. Everybody knew the story of Harold now, and she might as well go out and face the world at once. She had never been so long before without going to see Anne, and she thought longingly of Nancy's soft little arms round her neck, and of the way the child had of leaning her head against her aunt's cheek, and stroking her face.

She was stopped before she had got outside the gate. Peggy came running down the garden path after her, with her rosy face quite pale with fright.

"Oh, Miss Pamela!" she cried, "do come back. Here is Mrs. Dampier's little girl come over from Mr. Quicke to say he is took very ill, and he wants to see you at once."

Pamela hastened back to the hall where the girl was standing, smiling and courtesying with a childish callousness which seemed very horrible.

"Mother says it is a stroke," explained the little maid, in her self-satisfied tone, "and she told me to run all the way here, but lor', it is so hot! He has quite come to hisself now, but mother says nobody don't know how long it may last, so perhaps you'll just come along, miss?"

"Of course I'll come this moment. Is my father out still, Peggy? And David too?—well I must have Dobbin *and the chaise*, any way. Sit down, Betsy, I will *take you back* with me."

In spite of Peggy's remonstrances she ran out into the sunny yard, drew the little chaise out of the coach-house, and soon had Dobbin harnessed and between the shafts.

"You must run up and tell grannie where I am gone, Peggy," she said, as she got in and gathered up the reins; "she has been calling once or twice. I suppose she heard the chaise dragging over the stones, but I won't go in, there is no time to waste."

"The missus will be so angry, miss. Couldn't you have waited till master came in?"

But Pamela had already poked Betsy into her seat, and was rattling out of the gate.

She spoke but little as they drove on, but Betsy was extremely talkative. She seemed to take a delight in going over and over the history of Mr. Quicke's seizure. "Such a crash on the floor as he came, miss, you'd a' thought the house was coming down; and mother, she took her hands out of the suds, for she was a-washing at the time, and run up-stairs. Poor gentleman, he'd got his head right up again the leg of the sofa, and a chair as he must have caught hold of as he fell,—that lay beside of him."

Pamela's heart sickened: it was the first time she had been brought in contact with serious illness, and the suddenness of this made it very terrible.

"Oh, don't tell me any more of that, Betsy," she cried, "I want to know what the doctor said; does he think he will get well, and was he out of danger?"

"Doctor Bramwell, he don't seem to think he'll get through with it; but Doctor Jenkins, he came up of his own accord like afterwards, and seemed to say that it weren't such a bad case, if only so be he got the right kind of physic. However, since Mr. Quicke have been sensible, he can't a-bear Doctor Jenkins in the room, and it is all Doctor Bramwell, and none but he."

When Pamela first entered the invalid's darkened room, her eyes were so blinded by the glare without

that she could see nothing, and was only sensible that the room seemed a good deal disarranged: the furniture dragged about into unaccustomed places, and the air faintly scented with vinegar and water. By degrees she became able to make out the figure of her old friend, wrapped in his dressing-gown, and laid on the sofa near which he had fallen. His face looked somewhat drawn and shrunk, but otherwise his appearance seemed little altered at first. As she knelt by his side he put out his left hand to her, and then she noticed the strange, limp droop of his right arm, which was nearer to her, and understood with a shudder that it was useless.

"Oh, Mr. Quicke, I am so sorry to find you like this," she cried, taking his hand between hers. "What could have made this come so suddenly—and why are they not doing something for you? Surely, Doctor Bramwell has not gone away and left you so?"

"There is nothing to be done, child," said the old man, in a thick, labored voice, "except to cheer me up a bit. You can do that, better than old Sawbones."

The attempt at his old jocularity was quite too much for Pamela; she bent her head lower and lower, and the tears began to fall from her eyes on to the withered, insensitive arm and hand.

Presently he said, "Bring me a picture you will find on the table."

She rose with alacrity, glad to have an opportunity of wiping her eyes unobserved. On the table she found her friend's thick-rimmed spectacles, together with an open Bible and the little sketch which he had shown her years before as a copy of part of a picture by Lippo Lippi.

"Put it up somewhere, so that I can see it," he said, when she brought it to him.

There was no means of doing this, except by fastening it to the wall. After some deliberation she put a pin through the card-board on which it was mounted, and attached this to the wall-paper at the foot of his

sofa. He surveyed this arrangement with evident satisfaction, and took her hand in his kindly as she sat down again by his side.

"You are a good girl to come and see me," he said, with a smile struggling on one side of his face.

"I will stop here altogether if you will let me," offered Pamela, eagerly, "and help Mrs. Dampier to nurse you till you are better."

"No, no," said Mr. Quicke; "you have no business to be saddled with more sick folks than your own, but you shall come and see me sometimes, when I am well enough, mind—not otherwise."

"I should like to be of some use to you," she said, sadly. "I hoped you had meant that, when you sent for me, and I am not so much wanted at home as you think."

"I wanted to tell you something, that was why I sent for you. Even if I get well—I may, you know—I shall not have another chance perhaps. Pamela, child! I have left you my money; it is not much, but it is enough to make you independent. Independence is salvation for a woman sometimes."

"I am glad you told me," said Pamela after a pause, "I will not trouble you about such things now, but I hope you will change that when you get better. It is very good of you, dear Mr. Quicke, but how could I bear to take money from you, who are no relation to us—and when you must have others who are of your own kin, and who must expect it. We will talk about it in a few days, when you are better, and then I am sure you will do as I wish, won't you?"

"I have no relations who expect one farthing from me," exclaimed Mr. Quicke, raising himself a little; "I have some cousins in Yorkshire whom I never even saw, and who are rich people and would turn up their noses at my paltry savings, and there is no one else. There are three women who have been kind and good to me; you are the only one left, now my old mother is gone,

and you will be in want of armor,—you don't know how much good a little golden armor may be to you."

Pamela shook her head sorrowfully, but he went on. "If a man finds himself without money, things may go hardly for him, but he can generally get himself an honest living, but a woman—do you know how a woman keeps the wolf from the door? she sells herself. How many women do you suppose marry to keep themselves from want?"

"I should never do that," said the girl, proudly.

"I don't know, child. Girls as good and honest as you have done it. The one who made that picture did it; don't you be the first to blame her; she could neither dig nor beg, what choice was there left her? She married for a home; such a home it was, too!—and then —well, she broke her heart; but it is all so many years ago."

He turned his face away and closed his eyes. When he next spoke it was to ask Pamela to put more coverings on his feet, for he was cold in spite of his many wraps and the sultry weather.

"Now say good-bye, dear," he said, holding out his hand, and looking up to her with softened eyes. It was in vain she begged to be allowed to remain, or, at any rate, to return soon; he was obdurate, and insisted she should go home and not come to him again till he should send for her.

At last Mrs. Dampier interceded for her. "Why not let the young lady bide a bit if she likes?" she said.

"No, Dampier; send her home, like a good woman. Here, I'll whisper you a secret; would you like her to see what you saw this morning? No? Well, then, there may be another attack soon; let her be safe away, poor child."

She was almost blinded with her tears when she came and bent over him to say good-bye. The old man took her hand in his, and looked up to her as if in mute entreaty. She evidently understood his wish, for she

stooped down and kissed the weather-beaten face with a passion of grief and tenderness which seemed to thrill for a moment the poor paralyzed form under her touch. He raised himself up and laid his hand on her head, and then suddenly fell back. Mrs. Dampier began to fear lest Pamela should witness the terrible scene he had so longed to spare her, and hurried her away.

Pamela walked home slowly and sadly. The shadow of death which was hovering over her friend suffused all her thoughts, though they were not exclusively of him. In this dimness her own trouble seemed to shrink away and hide its head. The great calm world, lying under the evening sunshine, seemed no longer saddened by her sorrow. She began to understand that the earth rolled on in its course whether she wept or laughed; the inevitable came to her and to all—joy to one, sorrow to another, death to her friend, life perhaps to her—that the wildest prayers could not stay the curse nor bring down the blessing. What earthly wisdom indeed could say where lay the blessing and where the curse? One thing was certain, goodness reigned always in the end. It remained for her only to be patient and strong, to listen not only to the mournful beatings of her own heart but to the echoes from the world around her. Her life was but one note in the great symphony after all; why had she wasted so much pity on herself, she wondered, looking down upon her old thoughts and regrets from a new height? She drank deep draughts from the waters of humiliation and abnegation,—bitter, indeed, but healing and strengthening to a mind that had been feeding almost morbidly on its own sadness. She reached home, feeling strangely weary and shaken, but the crisis was over, she had her old brave heart back again; the freshness, the ignorance of evil,—these, alas! were gone for ever, but Pamela had passed beyond herself now. The selfish light-heartedness of youth, which is a fair enough thing in itself, had gone by, and she had entered into the patience and sympathy of a maturer life.

She found her father alone in his study. He had heard of Mr. Quicke's illness, and was anxious for more news of him. Pamela, for her part, was eager to let him know about the money, and to have some one to share with her the responsibility the knowledge of the bequest entailed.

"I would be the last person to urge you to accept it, if you have any scruples about doing so finally," he said, when he had heard her story; "but I must say, my child, this provision for you would make what remains of life much easier for me, and I don't think you have any reason for refusing it. I always understood Quicke had no relations to whom he would be likely to leave his money, and there have been many speculations as to what he would do with it. I certainly never dreamed one of my children would ever inherit it."

"I should like you to see him, father, as soon as he is a little better. I am quite ready to abide by what you think right."

"I will certainly speak to him on the matter on the first opportunity; but I fear it is only too likely that such may never come."

"Oh, father, what do you mean?"

"I saw Bramwell an hour ago. He thinks it may end very suddenly, and at any time. He will hardly survive another seizure if it follows the first quickly. I am sorry to shock you, my girl, but it is better you should be prepared."

Pamela watched all that evening, and through the soft summer night and the bright day that followed it, for the message that was to summon her to the sick man's side, but none came. George Lynton had been with him most of the day, and Mr. Honeywood had also visited his old neighbor, for whom he had always had a lurking kindness, though they had had many disagreements, and had professed no friendliness for one another. So much she knew from the various messengers who had gone backwards and forwards for news during the day.

Towards twilight she strolled out by herself, trying to calm her restlessness by wandering about; she could not bear to go far from the house, lest the call she was hoping for should come while she was absent. The extreme point of her walk was a little green-painted bridge, that crossed a small stream at one side of the home meadow. She was leaning over the railing and watching the bright water run under her feet, when a boy, whom she recognized as one of the Stourton servants, came up and put a slip of paper into her hand. He touched his hat, said, "There is no answer, miss," and was gone before she had had time to read, in the dim light, a few lines hastily written in George's hand.

"It is all over. Our friend passed away peacefully and painlessly at sunset. It was for your own sake he did not send for you; he spoke of you to the last, and bade me tell you this.

"G. L."

Five days later the old man was laid in his lonely grave in Merehampstead church-yard, far from those he had loved best when life was young and full of hope for him. His mother slept her last sleep under the shadow of a little gray church on the bleak Yorkshire moors where her hardy, active life had been spent. And that other woman whom he had remembered so faithfully to the end, where, Pamela wondered, as she stood tearfully over his newly-made grave, had the last scene of her life been played out? In what quiet nook had she found a rest from her sorrows and errors? So lonely and divided in life, surely they were united now in that strange far land, whose silence our cries cannot pierce, whose mystery our thoughts cannot reach.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"With weary steps I loiter on,
Though always under altered skies.
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone."

THERE was great surprise in Merehampstead when it was found that Pamela Burnet was Mr. Quicke's heiress. No one, perhaps, was more astonished at her good fortune than were the different members of her own family.

"Well," remarked Mrs. Burnet, when she had got the better of her first feeling of incredulity, "Heaven looks after them that don't look after themselves, certainly, and that is a mercy!"

"Heaven looks after the unselfish, grannie, there is no doubt about that," rejoined Anne, sturdily. "If any one ever deserved good luck it is Pamela, for she never goes one inch out of her way to get anything for herself."

The sum she had inherited proved to be larger than any one had anticipated. The lawyer who was winding up Mr. Quicke's affairs told her father that, when all was settled, there would be from two to three hundred a year for her, besides the house and furniture. "A very nice little fortune for a young lady who possesses so many other attractions," he said, with a smart bow. "And I am truly glad that she does not insist upon that romantic but most unnecessary measure of resigning the money *in favor of* those cousins in the north. It is

not in human nature (not ordinary human nature, I mean, Miss Burnet is an exception) to refuse money. I dare say if she had offered her fortune to them, they would have been mean enough to take it. But rest assured, they can neither expect it, nor have they the smallest right to it, and such a sum would be a trifle—a mere bagatelle—to those purse-proud trading folks."

Pamela would hardly acknowledge it to herself, but she could not help being sensible that a change, slight, certainly, but unmistakable, had crept over the manners of her friends and relations since she became an heiress. Her grandmother, though if anything more acid than usual to others, said fewer sharp things to her than of old; her father, too, put a faint tinge of distinction into his manner towards her which became exquisitely painful to her. Mrs. Turrell looked at her with a kind of languid admiration, and Joe became quite shy and awkward when she went to the Abbey. With Mrs. Campeny the difference was more refined, yet she could not deny that it existed. Anne at least, was quite untouched by change, and was as sisterly and motherly (for her ways had a tinge of both) as of old; and George was quite unaltered, as Pamela felt sure he would have been, even if his position had not made such small riches as hers a matter of indifference to him.

It was only a few days after Mr. Quicke's funeral, and before the feelings of surprise and congratulation inspired by Pamela's fortune had lost their first edge, that another piece of unexpected news reached Rose Hall. Aunt Carry wrote to her brother on behalf of John Burnet and Emilia. Johnnie had been paying another visit to the Longs; he had not given up his matrimonial intentions, and this time the Fates seemed to smile on his wooing. Emilia was evidently very fond of her cousin, her aunt stated, and if her father could reconcile himself to what, after all, he could scarcely *object to*, the marriage of cousins, the two young people *might* be made happy with a word. There was a badly-

written little note from Emilia enclosed, which expressed a hope that "dear father and grandmother would give their consent," and a more coherent epistle from Johnnie, setting his advantages and prospects in the most dazzling light, and evidently counting upon acceptance as a matter of course.

Mrs. Burnet received these letters with great amiability and satisfaction; her son with much doubt and struggle of mind, though on the whole he seemed inclined to take advantage of the provision made for his daughter, if only he could at all reconcile it with his conscience.

As for Anne, she burst out laughing when she learned the news, in a manner quite inconsistent with her usual matronly dignity.

"Well, if Milly doesn't have him, there will be an end of it," she said, flinging the letter on the table; "there are not any more of us."

To Pamela this discussion, coming close upon her friend's death, made a ghastly mixture of the sad and the grotesque too shocking to be spoken about. Nevertheless, for Emilia's sake she ventured upon strong remonstrance.

"I know what Johnnie is," she said to her father, clasping her hands in her eagerness; "he is mean and cruel and grasping. He will make her most miserable, so petted and made much of as she has been, poor little Milly!"

"You always had a prejudice against your cousin," he answered, turning uneasily in his chair; "I never thought so badly of him, though I can't say I am fond of the young man. I should like to see the child provided for. She is the most helpless of you all, poor little soul!"

"Oh, father, there is no need to trouble about that now I have this money. We could all live very nicely on that, and you may save another fortune for Emilia yet—who knows?"

"*No, child;* I have given up that delusion. The

goose that was to have laid the golden eggs and never did is stored up there," he said, pointing drearily to a cupboard in the corner of his study. "You will make a bonfire of it all when I am gone. As for your money, my dear, you will marry some day, and your husband may be less magnanimous than you are. I'd rather your sister had a home of her own."

"I will divide with her this moment if you fear that," cried Pamela; "and then it will be her own to do as she likes with; perhaps that will be better, only don't let her go and make this marriage before she knows more of him, and more of herself."

"I would not have suggested it, nor will I urge it now; but how can I refuse my consent — what reasons can I give? They both wish it, and he is respectable and well-to-do."

"Oh, it is one of those things that could stand without a reason, I think."

"Now you are talking nonsense; but run along, I must talk to your grandmother about it."

"Perhaps, after all," thought Pamela, "if they do love one another, it may be all right. If they do? but I can't endure the thought of it."

Anne's view of the matter comforted her a little. "I think John can't be unkind to her," she said; "and Emilia does not notice many of these things about him that we should not like. It does not take much to make her happy, and he is rich and will be able to give her plenty of the pretty dresses and things she likes so much. I wouldn't say anything against it, if I were you, dear."

It would not have been much use if she had. Mrs. Burnet had determined that the marriage was to take place, and even Pamela with all her money was as a feather in the balance compared with that well-established authority; so the family consent was duly written and dispatched to Johnnie Burnet, who thought it more coolly expressed than was at all fitting. The news of

Pamela's wealth traveled by the same post. Naturally Johnnie was vexed to find that after so much deliberation he had pitched upon the wrong sister, but a little reflection convinced him that Pamela, who had been a fractious subject in the days of her poverty, would be perfectly unmanageable now, and that it would be rather awkward to transfer his allegiance at that point of the proceedings. He was very sulky for a few days, and reminded Emilia once or twice how much he was giving up in taking to himself a penniless bride. She took it with perfect good temper. "As you are going to get all father's property for nothing I don't see anything to make such a fuss about," she remarked one day—an answer which so completely took him aback that he made no reply, and did not show any more temper on that occasion.

After all, perhaps, Anne was right in thinking they were not altogether badly matched.

Richard Burnet seemed greatly relieved when the matter of this engagement was really settled; yet after a short time, the want of his old stimulus of anxiety had a strange and depressing effect upon him. Day by day he grew more listless and apathetic. His manuscripts were all hidden away, and he never took a pen in his hand. Much of his time was still passed alone in his study, but when Pamela surprised him there, she generally found him sitting by the open window, with one of the little leather-covered volumes from her mother's book-shelf in his hands.

"Why, father, you are getting terribly idle," she said one day, her anxious face little according with her light words. "What is happening to your work all this time?"

"My work is done, thank heaven," he said, gazing dreamily out into the sunny distance; "my work is done."

She tried every method to rouse him in vain. George Lynton was her able ally, but was no more suc-

cessful. At times he would bring over some curious old book of engravings from the Stourton library, to consult him about the symbols of a mediæval woodcut; sometimes he would have a knotty question of architectural history to solve: Mr. Burnet would appear interested for the time, and would answer the young man's questions patiently and intelligently, but the next moment he would fall back into his strange abstracted silence, and though he was always perfectly courteous to his guest, George could hardly flatter himself that his visits were very welcome. Still he continued to go frequently to Rose Hall, for he could not bear to leave Pamela alone in her sadness, and he could do much to cheer her, even if her father were beyond help. Indeed, he seemed to be so, for his bodily health failed fast, and Dr. Bramwell told him he was dying because he had no wish to live. Richard only smiled and said he was ready to go when his time came.

The summer had passed into autumn, and the autumn into winter, and Emilia still remained in London. Johnnie seemed to have no desire to appear at Merehampstead in the character of an engaged lover, and in accordance with his wish, it was decided that the wedding should take place from Mrs. Long's house soon after Christmas. Pamela made an excuse of her father's poor health and declined to go. She could have been ill spared from home at that time, and she had no desire either to be present at the wedding, or to enter her aunt's house again as a guest. Anne was a little offended at the whole arrangement, and said rather sharply, if Milly liked to come and be married decently from her own home, she would not be the last to go and wish her joy, but that she wasn't going gadding to London after her.

So it happened that the wedding-day came and passed by, and they could hardly realize that any change had taken place in their sister's condition. She wrote them one of her usual little mis-spelled letters soon after

the event from Manchester, signing herself, "Your affectionate sister, Emilia Burnet," and enclosing a scrap of her wedding gown, and the wedding gown seemed to them the only part of the business that had any reality about it.

"It doesn't seem like being married at all, does it," said Anne, "Not even to change one's name?"

"She'll find plenty of change," said Joe, ominously, "though it won't be in her name. She has never had to do with the like of that sneak before. He'll break her heart before the year is out, you'll see."

"Nonsense, Joe. You talk of the poor young man as if he were a perfect demon. Please to remember he is your brother-in-law." Anne's eyes twinkled with a spark of malice as she spoke: she could not resist the temptation to tease her husband sometimes on the subject of his formal rival. She had grown merrier since her marriage, and had developed a taste for quiet fun of which she had had little as a girl.

"He's no more my brother-in-law than he is my grandfather, confound him! I'll have nought to do with him. Your sister-in-law's husband isn't your brother-in-law that ever I heard of,—eh, Pamela?"

"Of course he is," said Pamela—"your brother-in-law once removed;—but never mind, Joe; he'll be pretty well removed from all of us, I fancy."

The bridegroom, however, wrote in the early spring to request permission to bring his wife down to her old home.

Pamela wrote in answer, and begged them to come as quickly as possible if Emilia wished to see her father alive. He had taken a change for the worse, and even if they started at once they might be too late.

Then there followed a hurried, miserable journey in the sleet and rain of chilly April days. They reached home in a forlorn, gray twilight, and were greeted on the door-steps by Pamela. "You are too late," she said, as she put her arms round her sister's neck and drew her in from the rain.

Poor little bride! She was quite broken down with sorrow and fatigue and the dreariness of her home-coming, and lay almost insensible in Pamela's arms. When they brought her to a blazing fire and chafed her cold hands and feet she soon began to revive. John hovered about her with cups of tea, and cushions, and was very polite and attentive; but she took little notice of him, and seemed to care for nothing so much as to sit still in the pleasant warmth and hold Pamela's hand in her own.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Oh, Angel of the East, one, one gold look
Across the waters to this twilight nook—
The far, sad waters, Angel, to this nook!"

UP to almost the last moment Mrs. Burnet refused to believe in her son's danger, and even when he was actually dying she struggled with her own convictions and told the doctor constantly, "He will weather it out, doctor—he will weather it out; Richie always had such a fine constitution."

She would not allow her arm-chair to be moved from his bedside, but sat there day and night peering with her dim old eyes into his face, wandering a little in her mind sometimes from the weakness and weariness induced by her long watching, and going back in her fancy to his childish days, as she had done to his childish pet name.

When all was over her grief was much like that of a child—violent, but short-lived. It is difficult to appreciate the feelings of a very old person in such a case; she could hardly grieve much that he was gone where she must soon follow him; perhaps she felt he was really nearer to her in the other world than in this. It annoyed her extremely, however, to see her nephew walking about the house that had been her husband's and her son's, with the conscious airs of a master, and as she could not wreak her vengeance on him, poor Emilia had often to flinch under the lash, for her husband's *faults. It was* quite a new experience to her, and she

did not bear it very well. Altogether they were not a happy party, and it was a great relief to Pamela when John and his wife started for Manchester; for he wished to make the most favorable terms for disposing of his share in his father's business before he settled at Rose Hall. At the same time Pamela began her preparations for moving into Merehampstead.

Still, leaving the old home seemed very hard. She wandered in and out of the rooms, opened cupboard doors and shut them again, for the mere sake of old friendship. There was not a flower in the garden she did not linger over with tender regret, nor one nook of the quaint house she did not visit with tearful eyes and loving memories. One of her most trying duties was going over her father's papers and manuscripts. George helped her in this task, or it would have been almost unmanageable. Nothing was in a fit state for publication, even if they had thought that advisable; but neither could Pamela bear, as her father had suggested, to make a bonfire of the whole. Finally, they consigned these melancholy relics of a wasted life to a huge trunk, and sent it off to the new house, where it found a quiet corner in the lumber-room. If the ghost of the lawyer ever haunted his old abode, how it must have grinned over these futile literary labors!

It was a bright morning early in June when all was ready for the move, which had been once or twice delayed to suit the new master's arrangements. George and Pamela had ended their labors and stood together for the last time in poor Richard's study.

"I am so glad the papers are done," Pamela was saying—"that was the worst part; but you have helped me so much, you have made it the lightest. How can I ever thank you enough for all you have done, Mr. George? Who else would have been such a kind and patient friend to me?"

George stood at the open window picking the leaves from a pot of musk and crushing them in his fingers.

"I have been your friend for many years Pamela; I deserve, and will ask no other reward than you may choose to give me; what shall it be?"

She looked down and was silent.

"I can give you nothing that is worth your taking," she said, "only a great deal of gratitude."

He came over to where she stood, but paused before he was near enough to touch her hand, and watched her keenly: "Are you sure that that is so?" he asked at last. "Could you not trust in me enough to let me take care of you, and to give me a little love? If you were my wife, Pamela, surely you would learn to like me a little; and to be with you, to try to make you happy, and to comfort you after all these troubles would be a heaven of content to me. It would not be as happy as if you had loved me altogether and from the first, as I have loved you; but it would be the best thing I can hope for now. I speak of myself because I know you will never listen to any schemes for your own good. But I think, dear, I could make your life brighter too for you if you would let me."

"You have made my life brighter for me as it is," answered Pamela, trembling; "is that any reason why I should darken yours for you?"

"Have I?" said George, heeding only the first words. He came forward now and took her hand. "Think of it," he implored, "and do not refuse me now. I ask so little of you, and you may give me so much happiness. I will come back in a few days and ask you how it is to be, and I shall see by your face how you have decided."

"Oh, no, no!" cried Pamela. "Such things must not be talked of between us. Our paths are wide apart; you must go your way and I must go mine. Let us be friends; surely we may be that when once we have owned there is a great gulf fixed between us, and are pledged not to try to pass it. Your wife must *be rich and* great like yourself, Mr. George; and she

must love you as you deserve to be loved, as you will be loved one day—you who are so young, and generous, and kind."

"Pamela, you have no right to talk like this. Do you think the love I have given to you can be handed over to some one else like a mere chattel? I have known you for six years now, and have never had a thought that was untrue to you; if you cannot even give me the little of your heart I ask you for, I must bear my trouble as best I can. God forbid that I should ask you to lay an untruth on your fair white soul for my sake, but do not put me off with foolish no-reasons. I am going away now, dear," he added in gentler tones, as he bent and touched her hair with a timid hand; "when I come back you shall tell me how it is to be. Only judge on righteous grounds, Pamela, and God bless you!"

She sat down by herself when he was gone, and remained for a long time with her head resting on her hands, and the tears dropping on her black dress. So far as she knew she was weeping because she could not give him what he wanted. Harold had left her, or never loved her, and she had told herself she would forget him; but there was no possibility of patching up the old broken love which had been all his and now was gone for ever. She knew there was nothing left for another, yet she wept because she would, and she could not. She would fain have loved this faithful friend who was so kind and gentle to her; she would gladly have turned her back upon her dull old life, and gone away into the bright world he offered her; but something held her back—something so stern and pitiless that she could not even struggle against it; she could only shed tears of sorrow and pity for him and for herself.

It was well for her that she had not much time just then to dwell on her troubles and difficulties. There was her grandmother to take care of and cheer up, and a great deal of packing to do, and handling of old fa-

miliar articles, the very sight of which called up memories which drove all other thoughts out of her head.

Two days had passed since she had seen George. She felt thankful to him for keeping away and sparing her any further conflict just then. The last day at Rose Hall had come, and she felt sure she should not be called upon to see him again until she had escaped from the influence of her old home. Once gone away into a new and harder world, she thought she would be colder and stronger—better able to tell him he must separate himself from her until he could learn to look at her in a different light—better able to give up her one only friend, and herself pronounce sentence of banishment on him.

She was busy stowing away some books in a box when she heard a sound of carriage wheels crunching up the gravel path, and, soon after, Peggy came running up-stairs with a card held carefully in her apron and an awe-struck expression of face.

"Oh, Miss Pamela, it is Mrs. Lynton," she explained; "she is a-sitting in the best parlor, and she wants to see yew."

"Are you sure it is not grandmother she asked for?" said Pamela, rising from her knees and brushing the dust off her dress.

"It was 'Miss Burnet' the footman asked for, as plain as he could speak. And my lady herself, she said, 'Du ye ask her to give me a few minutes if she bean't very busy,' quite kind and condescending like. And oh, Miss Pamela, don't yew think yew'd better change your gown? That one is all so mucked with the packing."

"Great ladies should choose their visiting times better, Peggy. If they like to come in the midst of moving they must put up with shabby dresses. But I'll wash my hands, at any rate."

As Pamela stood before the looking-glass smoothing her hair and arranging her muslin collar she felt she *should like to put* on another dress. She would rather

have appeared looking her best before this haughty lady, who, she felt almost sure, had come on some errand which she would have to resent; but she would not give in to such weakness, and hurried down-stairs in her shabby black gown with a beating heart, and a flush on her cheeks which made her look very handsome in spite of her dingy drapery.

Mrs. Lynton greeted her very kindly, rising from the sofa, and holding the girl's hand in her own while she alluded to poor Richard's death and expressed her sympathy with great earnestness.

"I am afraid I have come at a very busy time," she said at last; "for they tell me you are moving into the town almost immediately. What a sad parting it must be for you from your old home!"

"Yes," said Pamela with a sigh; "and yet I shall be almost glad to be away now, and begin as it were afresh."

"I should have chosen a more convenient opportunity for my visit," remarked the lady, playing nervously with the handle of her parasol, "but I did not know you were leaving so soon, and I wished so much to see you before you left here."

"Do not trouble yourself at all about that," begged Pamela with a graciousness quite equal to her own. "Our packing is nearly finished, and we have as much time as we like before us. I will let my grandmother know you are here if you will allow me, Mrs. Lynton; I am sure she will like to thank you for your kind inquiries about her."

"Pray do not disturb her," interrupted Mrs. Lynton, eagerly, laying her hand on Pamela's arm to prevent her rising; "I dare say she does not care to see strangers yet, and it is to you, my dear, I am anxious to say a few words."

Pamela bowed, her suspicions returned with a rush, and she felt how foolish she had been to be deceived by a few soft words. She sat down again, and listened for what was to come in silence.

"Do you know, I am quite anxious to apologize for my son?" said the lady with a gentle smile. "I know how much *de trop* a young man is likely to be when there is sickness and trouble in the house, and I am really ashamed to think how much George must have hindered you lately with his visits. You must not allow it, my dear Miss Burnet. Why should he come here and waste your time as well as his own? I beg of you to have no scruples of politeness, but just tell him to run away home when you have had enough of him, as you would any other tiresome boy."

"Mr. Lynton has been helping me through a painful and tedious task—looking through a mass of my poor father's papers. I am very sorry if his charitable labors have taken up more time than he could really spare from other things," answered Pamela.

"He has certainly neglected his home duties terribly lately; but if he has been any assistance to you I am sure I do not regret it. I trust to your discretion, and to the power a woman older than himself always has over a youth of George's age, to send him back to attend to his own affairs now his little services are ended. I am so glad to hear that he has not been tiresome to you."

"I should scarcely like to presume on my seniority by dictating to Mr. George," said Pamela, meekly, but with a little curl of the lip, "particularly when my small powers of persuasion are so unnecessary. No doubt your wishes will be amply sufficient for your son."

"Young men are not quite so submissive to their mothers as you might imagine, my dear, as you will find out when you have sons of your own," answered Mrs. Lynton, rising.

"I dare say not," said Pamela; "but, at Mr. George's age? Do they begin to have wills of their own so early?"

Mrs. Lynton had come with the intention of scolding Pamela *gently;* she wished to show her that it was

not at all the thing for a girl in her position to have a young aristocrat like George dangling after her. Her heart had failed her at the last moment, and she had not said all she had intended to, and now, as a reward for her forbearance, here was the girl laughing at her almost openly! It was not in human nature to nourish no feelings of anger under such circumstances. She held out her hand rather stiffly.

"I have no wish to discuss my son's faults, Miss Burnet. I still hope that you will discourage, as far as lies in your power, any idle habits he may have formed. At any rate, I am sure I can trust to time to set right his little mistakes. Good-bye; pray do not let me bring you to the door. My kind remembrances to your grandmother, please;" and with uplifted dress she picked her way rapidly through the packing-cases and rolls of carpet that encumbered the dismantled hall, and climbed the steps of the great Stourton chariot. The tall footman slammed the door upon his mistress, and with another condescending bow she was rolled away home, having done a good deal more mischief than she knew of.

Mrs. Lynton had done her spiriting more gently than Mrs. Long, but it all amounted to the same thing, as Pamela well knew. She sat down when her visitor was gone and burst out laughing, but there was not much mirth in her laughter. "What a deal of trouble I give them all!" she said to herself: "first it seems I am going to marry some one who is not good enough, and Aunt Carry is up in arms; then I am inveigling poor Mr. George, who is far too good for me—and that is worse than all. Why are they so suspicious and interfering, I wonder?" she asked herself, passing from her hard laughter to a flood of tears. "Poor George! he is the only one, I think, who is unworldly and kind; but they will take him away too, and then I shall not have a single friend left in the whole world."

Presently she dried her tears and went back to her

packing. Her eyes were dim, and her head swimming with pain. All her old resolution and patience seemed to have broken down at last; one question would come back and back again to her weary brain—why should she not save to herself so much of the good things of life as remained possible for her? She could silence envious, carping tongues if she liked; she could get the better of Mrs. Lynton; she could protect herself against the small impertinences of Johnnie Burnet. She could plunge into a new life, bright and rich and honorable, and forget the old heart-aches, the shattered hopes that haunted her still. She could make George, if not happy, at least happier; she would be a good wife to him, she told herself, and would devote all her life and energies to making herself a fit helpmeet to him in the works he had most at heart. As for her grandmother, she should have all Mr. Quicke's money, and Pamela knew she would be happier with either Anne or Emilia than with herself. And yet at the end of it all she made to herself but one answer—"It can never be. It can never be!"

Was it George Lynton's good or bad angel that led him down that evening to the green bridge just at the time when Pamela had come out to breathe a little fresh air after her labors? He found her in her moment of greatest weakness. He was strong with love and hope —she was so weary, and sad, and heart-sore. If there can be any excuse for such a failure, it was hers then; but as she walked home afterwards, with down-bent head and a burning sense of wrong in her heart, she told herself there was no excuse, no word to be said in favor of her false, wicked promise. Once she paused in the twilight and then ran rapidly back to the bridge, hoping to find him still there, that she might take back her word. He was gone, and there lay before her only the calm, gray stream, with its broken reflection of the little crescent moon, and the dusky green fields closing down to the water.

"I must wait till to-morrow," she thought; "but it will be harder then. And will my head ache and ache so all the time?"

She did not see George for some days after this; other things had happened in the meantime, and the old angry despair had come back upon her. When they did meet, her first wrong-doing had had its effects upon her; she was grown harder and colder. It seemed to matter little to her how she acted; indeed she felt as if her fate had passed out of her own hands, and some horrible catastrophe must come at last to solve her difficulties and rouse her from this nightmare of dread and trouble.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"I lived on and on
As if my heart were kept beneath a glass,
And everybody stood, all eyes and ears,
To see and hear it tick."

NO people were more astonished when they heard of George Lynton's engagement than the good folks who had gossiped so freely about him and Pamela. They had enjoyed prophesying the event, but they were both surprised and angry to find it had really taken place. Even those who had known and liked Pamela were offended and scandalized by her presumption in aspiring to become one of the greatest family in the neighborhood. Her own relations were indignant. Anne almost went down on her knees to beg her sister to do what she was only longing to do of her own accord if she had been let alone and not bullied into obstinacy. Joe took himself off now into the kitchen when she went to the Abbey; even old Jones looked the other way when she passed instead of touching his hat. Only aunt Carry and Johnnie Burnet wrote their unwelcome congratulations. The former was particularly triumphant: "I hope you will appreciate now, dear Pamela, the efforts that were made for your happiness at a time when you seemed disposed to throw yourself away upon a person whom I will not name, and whom it would indeed be a shame to mention in the same breath with our dear Mr. George. How truly thankful we should be when we remember what troubles you

have been spared by a merciful Providence, and what a happy prospect lies before you!" with much more in the same style.

Mrs. Lynton condescended to no remonstrance or communication of any kind with either Pamela or her relations. Fearful reports were spread about as to the violence of the old lord's wrath when he heard of the alliance George contemplated, and Mrs. Bramwell whispered to a few of her intimate friends that her husband dreaded an attack of apoplexy; but they made no outward sign of disapproval of any kind. Mrs. Lynton's one desire now was to prevent any hasty marriage: as she had told Pamela, she had great faith in time, and hoped that if delayed, the evil might be altogether avoided. For the delay itself she had only Pamela to thank. She shrunk from any plans for fixing the date of her marriage with a distaste that bewildered and saddened George, who was anxious to deliver her from the coil of difficulties with which she was surrounded at once. Indeed, George's state of mind was not so happy as that of an accepted lover should be. Pamela was strange and fitful in her ways: sometimes merry with a hard recklessness so unlike her old playfulness that he could hardly bear to see her, but oftener sad and depressed beyond anything he could account for. Of her trials he knew nothing. He never met her now except in her own house, and all the little slights she underwent at the hands of those who had once loved and believed in her were unseen by him. Still the shadow which had fallen over her enfolded him too, and Mrs. Lynton said little more than the truth when she complained to Miss Isabella De Wint that the girl had blighted his life, and that, whether she married him or not, he would never be fit for anything again.

"She must be an extraordinary creature, my dear," said Miss Isabella. "First of all, a dry old piece of *parchment* like Mr. Quicke leaves her a fortune, and a *very tidy* fortune for a person of her condition; and *then, poor* George—what is it about her?"

"Heaven knows!" said Mrs. Lynton. "Not her beauty."

"I don't know. Some men have a great fancy for those queer complexions. What are her manners like?"

"Oh, don't ask me about the girl! You'll all know enough of her manners by the time she is mistress of Stourton. I should call her pert myself; but, dear me! I am told that is the fashion."

"Well, I am sure I should have thought George was the very last person to be taken with a woman of that kind; but don't despair, Augusta, the wind can't always blow from one quarter; as long as she does not hurry him into marriage there is hope."

"She knows her poor fish is too securely hooked to care for that," said Mrs. Lynton, bitterly; "and she holds off herself, or pretends to."

So Pamela, having once set herself to run down the wrong path, found no lack of hands to push her on and to clear out of her way any little kindly obstruction that offered to stay her course. When help did come, it was from a quarter from which she had long ceased to expect any good.

It was a rainy, damp summer, and Pamela, who was accustomed to country life, felt the confinement to a dull, street house very severely. Sometimes she went over to the Little Farm for a change; Mrs. Turrell and Mrs. Campeny were kind to her still—the one, perhaps, from her natural softness of character, and the other from a deeper discrimination than most people are blessed with. These were her only visits at that time. She had been told that Harold and his wife were expected, and had heard the news with a mixture of dread and longing, which she had covered up in her own heart and had tried to be insensible of. No certain time had been fixed for their arrival, and when they did come their appearance was a surprise to other people besides Pamela.

One rainy afternoon early in July, she took advan-

tage of a pause between the showers to walk over to Mrs. Turrell's. She stood still and took a long look at Rose Hall as she passed. The house was dreary and uninhabited, and the great iron gates were for once closed on their rusty hinges. The poplars rustled in the fitful wind, and scattered raindrops upon her as she leaned her face for a moment against the bars and looked at the house with its shuttered windows. She could just remember the first time she had seen them so, when she was quite a little girl and her mother lay in her coffin in the big bedroom over the hall. She recalled the dreariness of the darkened house, and the miserable feeling of bewilderment that came over her when they told her her mother was dead.

How different everything might have been if her mother had lived, she thought, as she turned sadly away; and then her mind came back to her ever-present troubles, and she longed wearily for some one to help her, as her mother might have helped her if she had been alive, to break through the difficulties she had surrounded herself with. She had been engaged only three weeks, yet her whole character seemed to have undergone a change in that short time. Branded even by her friends as a girl who was making a mercenary and dishonorable marriage, and sorely accused by her own conscience, all her old proud self-reliance had left her. Her courage and patience had gone too; a turn of the head or a cool word was enough to raise storms of suppressed passion in her. She who had been so strong and secure in her own rectitude had become nervously sensitive to the faintest sign of approbation or reproof, though the one seemed to give her but short-lived comfort, and the other to excite wrath rather than repentance. She was but a mere wreck of her old self as, with down-bent head, she went swiftly along the wet roads to crave a little kindness, a little comfort even, from poor, foolish Mrs. Turrell. She pushed open the garden gate at the Little Farm, and was standing on the threshold

when she heard a loud, familiar voice inside, singing the refrain of an old ballad.

Her heart beat loud and fast, and then seemed to pause altogether; she would have turned back had she dared, but some one might have seen her, and she was ashamed to acknowledge her weakness even to herself. With desperate courage she turned the handle of the parlor door and went in. Harold was lounging in an arm-chair with a book propped up among the cushions; Julia sat on the other side of the room with a piece of work in her hand; Mrs. Turrell, in her usual corner, was busy darning her son's socks.

Pamela had had the advantage of a little preparation; she behaved on the whole more coolly than Harold. He rose up as if he had seen a ghost, and held out his hand to her in a half-imploring manner. She touched it with the tips of her cold fingers, and sat down in a dusky corner by Mrs. Turrell.

They all remained so for some time, talking calmly enough of indifferent matters. After a while Pamela felt she ought to go, yet a kind of fascination compelled her to remain and watch Julia and study her relations with her husband. He seemed to treat her on the whole more like a servant that anything else. Once he asked vaguely for a penknife which ought to have been in his pocket, and though he had not addressed himself immediately to her, she got up and went away quickly to fetch it. When she returned he held out his hand for the article without even looking at her or pausing in the remark he was making. Julia seemed to take it as a matter of course, and merely slipped back to her seat and her sewing. She had grown a tall, handsome young woman, with great dark eyes, a brilliant complexion, and abundance of coarse, black hair. Yet in spite of the bold style of her beauty, there was a timid, almost beseeching expression upon her face. Now and then she glanced at her husband as if to see whether he *wanted anything*; except for that she never raised her

eyes from her monotonous task. As Pamela looked at her the tears came into her eyes, and a great feeling of pity for the girl rose in her heart. It was the first sign of returning grace, the first breaking up of the hard winter that reigned there, for such feelings had been strangers to her for what seemed a long time now.

Harold became more at his ease after the first few minutes, or at any rate pretended to be so. He told stories of his friends abroad, mimicked the learned German ladies who had patronized him and smiled on him through their spectacles, and recounted tales of rollicking students' practical jokes, with much laughter at his own wit. Mrs. Turrell understood that this kind of thing was not quite proper, and would not have been, if only Mrs. Campeny had been present. She did not understand Harold's old relations to Pamela, but she felt there had been something between them which demanded gravity of demeanor, if not absolute penitence, on the young man's part. Thinking to make a diversion of this flood of nonsense, she asked him to sing to them. "I'm sure we have heard enough of these stories, and they do you but little credit, Harold. Come now, sing us a song; not one of your noisy ones, but something quiet and nice. I don't know why I asked Anne to let you have the harpsichord over here if you're never to lay finger on it."

Pamela had hoped he would refuse; but no, he rose and opened the instrument. There was no escape for her, she had to listen to what came. It was very different from old days, however; the voice seemed coarser, the hand heavier, and the song itself, with its rattling noisy accompaniment, was very unlike the tender little melodies he had written long ago for George's lines. These were the words:

"When I am old, and you are grown
Less fair than now, my rose of June,
You ask me shall I sing to you?
Or if I sing, to what sad tune?

"How can you ask, or I reply,
To such a question while you sit
And mock me from that flowery bank,
Where happy summer insects flit?

"And while you seem to me so like
The sunny cloud-flecked summer sky,
Where still the steadfast blue remains
Whatever clouds are passing by?

"Within your eyes a spirit sits
Serenely fair, divinely strong,
That must remain whatever fades,
Tho' time press hard, and life be long.

"That is yourself, and must be still,
Though age may line that brow so clear:
Just as the sun shines up above
Whatever showers are falling here.

"And as we talk in summer time
Of winter with its frost and cold,
Fancy, perhaps, may feign a spring,
To cheer our hearts when we are old.

"At least, I love you passing well
Now daisies press about your feet,
And why not make a pleasant sketch
Of what shall be in future, sweet?

"And if, maybe, in coming years
I do not find you still so fair,
'Tis like you'll think me not so wise,
And then, you know, you will not care."

Harold had his back to the company as he sang; when he rose from the instrument he looked round the room in some surprise.

"She is gone," said Mrs. Turrell; "she said she had over-stayed her time already."

"Oh!" answered Harold blankly, and he put his hands in his pockets and sauntered out into the rain-drenched garden.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"Fair death of things that living once were fair;
Bright sign of loveliness too great for me,
Strange image of the dread eternity,
In whose void patience how can these have part,
These outstretched feverish hands, this restless heart?"

AS Pamela hastened along the road homewards, the sullen drapery of cloud to westward opened for a moment and cast a lurid yellow light after her as she fled. The wet trees and hedgerows quivered and sparkled in the baleful gleam against the dark background of the sky. It seemed to her like a sardonic laugh of nature at her misery; she drew her cloak round her shoulders and hurried on. But soon the rent in the great cloud canopy closed, the light went out into gray twilight, and raindrops began to fall thick and fast. Her steps seemed to falter under her, but she made her way as quickly as she could against the beating rain, and had almost reached her own door when a voice, and a hand on her arm, arrested her: "Are you running away from me, dear?" it said.

"Oh, George!" cried Pamela, catching at his hand, and speaking in a strange, excited way, "I wish I had run away from you long ago, before I had brought all this sad, sad trouble upon you. Oh, only forgive me, and let me go now—let me go away and not make you unhappy any more!"

She was almost falling as she spoke, but he caught her arm and drew it within his.

"I don't understand you," he said, gravely; "but you shall tell me all this afterwards. You must let me take you home now out of this pouring rain. You are ill and agitated. Come, lean on me, dear; we are just home, and then you must lie down and rest."

They spoke no more till he left her upon her own door-step. Then he said, "I will come and see how you are to-morrow," and she answered with dry, white lips, "I will write to you before that; good-bye—good-bye, George."

He pressed her hand, and went away silently, but with a sad and terror-stricken heart.

Pamela made her way at once to her own room. She hastily threw off her wet cloak, and went to her writing-table, but the hand that held the pen refused to obey her will, her head swam, the wildest thoughts chased one another in and out of her brain, and writing seemed even more impossible than speech had been when she was leaning on George's arm. Presently Peggy came knocking at the door to call her to tea, and she had to go down and attend to her grandmother's wants. Mrs. Burnet was getting too old to be observant; she did not notice her granddaughter's shaking hands and heavy eyes, but she failed not to remark upon the fact of her toast being badly buttered and her tea sugarless.

"I am sorry, grannie," said Pamela, as she rectified her mistakes. "I think now you have all you want; I must go up-stairs and rest a bit. Will you mind having Peggy in to take care of you for this once? I'm not well, I think, and my head aches so terribly."

"No wonder you are ill,—going ramping about in such weather, and getting yourself drenched through and through. You'd best go to bed, and I'll send Peggy to you with some gruel. I want no waiting upon to speak of, thank Heaven! so don't fret yourself about me."

So she escaped to her own room, but there was no

rest for her yet in spite of her throbbing brow and tottering limbs. Her little white bed looked cool and inviting; she longed, as she paced up and down, to lay her head on the pillow and shut her eyes, if it were only for a moment; but her task must be accomplished first—her confession made: if the letter broke her own heart in the writing of it, and George's in the reading, it must be written. So she sat down again before the sheet of paper, blank hitherto except for a tear that had fallen on it.

When Peggy brought the gruel she found her young mistress's door locked, though she could tell by the direction of her voice and the light which shone through the keyhole that she was not in bed. She went slowly back to her kitchen with the rejected tray in her hand, feeling very anxious and uncomfortable, and spent most of her evening in listening for any sound from up-stairs. About half-past nine, when Mrs. Burnet was comfortably settled in bed, the kitchen door opened softly, and Pamela glided in, holding a letter in her hand.

"Peggy," she said, "you must send this note over to Stourton for me at once, please."

"Why, miss! yew must be clean daft. Tu think of folks going to Stourton at this time of night, and in such weather tu!"

"I should like it to go now," she begged. "Wouldn't one of Mrs. Dickens's children take it?"

"Bless you! they are all a-bed and asleep hours ago. Come now, Miss Pamela, I'll send off little Bob Dickens with it the first thing in the morning; but you must just come along to bed now, for you du look like a ghost."

With this assurance Pamela had to be content. "You won't forget?" she said, with a weary sigh, as she suffered herself to be led up-stairs to her room. Peggy undressed her and put her to bed as if she had been a child; how delicious it was to find herself in that quiet white nest at last, with the old servant's kindly hands tucking the sheets round her.

"Oh, Peggy," she said, as she put up her face to be kissed, "how good you are to me! Yes, I will try and eat some of your gruel, though I don't think I want it, but just to please you."

"Indeed, you've tasted neither bite nor sup since dinner time, and you'll be having the fever at this rate, and going out in the rain and all. But sleep you well, my child, and you'll be as right as a trivet by the mornin'."

But in spite of this exhortation, Pamela passed a terrible night. It was a time of dull, half-conscious pain, with short intervals of sleep broken by a maddening succession of dreams. From forgotten corners of her memory, strange faces and incidents sprung up, woven into grotesque confusion and linking together times and places which had no sort of connection. No thread of ideas had any rational ending: everything broke off suddenly, and merged into something else with an exhausting persistence which seemed endless. One vision came back over and over again. She thought she saw George Lynton driving a coach with gilded panels, such as she had seen in a drawing-room procession years before in London. He was trying to urge the six cream-colored horses up an almost perpendicular bank; every time, just as they reached the top, they slipped back and came crashing down, carriage and all, in a horrible ruin; and every time she felt the same sickening terror and vain longing to rush forward and rescue George, yet at the same time she knew that she was lying in her bed and in a different world altogether from the dream-land in which he was suffering, though his world seemed more a reality than her own.

When Peggy came to call her in the morning, she looked up wearily and said, "Oh, do pull down the blind, the fire glares so outside, and it seems to burn my eyes!" Then she turned round, and, in the darkened room, fell at last into a quiet sleep.

When she woke, the same twilight still reigned, and

she was sensible of a rare sense of coolness and comfort. Lying with her eyes shut she presently discovered that some one was holding a cold wet bandage upon her head. She looked up, and met the glance of a pair of kindly brown eyes. "Who is it?" she cried, nervously raising herself on one arm.

"Why, Julia! is it you? How did you get here?"

"I came over to see you, and Peggy told me you were not well; so I asked her to let me come up and sit with you for a bit; she has so much to do for your grandmother."

"That is very kind of you, but I don't think I am ill. Have I been here very long? I seem to forget."

"You have been sleeping all the time since I have been here, and Doctor Bramwell said that was the best thing you could do. You must be taken care of though for a few days. I should so like to stay here and nurse you, if I might," she added, timidly.

"It is very kind of you, Julia, but you would be wanted at home, you know."

"At the Little Farm? Oh no; nobody wants me there at all. You must let me stay to-night, for I have written to tell them and to ask them to send over my things."

Pamela was very glad to submit to the inevitable, and, indeed, Julia took good care of her. She brought her cooling drinks and tempting little mouthfuls of food; her hands, her voice, her step, as she moved lightly and quickly about the room, were all pleasant and gentle. Once Pamela asked her who had taught her to be such a clever little nurse.

"I've had plenty of practice," she said; "I had to take care of poor mother all by myself, only I had none of the nice things for her I find ready at hand for you, and she had to bear her pain in a noisy London lodging, instead of a quiet old house like this."

"Poor Julia!" said Pamela, softly.

"Leaving her at nights was the worst. Sometimes

it was twelve o'clock before I could get back from—from the theatre, you know," she went on, bravely, "and she couldn't bear being alone in the dark. I used to give her a candle when we could afford it, but that wasn't often."

"And you kept her and did everything for her yourself? You, who were a child almost when I was a grown woman, and you have had all these troubles and done so bravely! Oh, Julia, I feel as if I could fall down and worship you! I never understood how good you were before, dear."

"Other people would tell a different tale," said Julia with a hard laugh. "Other people think me a downright disgrace to the family. Don't you see how they all look at me at the Little Farm? But there, you mustn't talk any more, and I think I hear the gig come with my things. Lie down, Pamela, and, oh dear, don't cry for me. I'm not worth your tears at any rate."

Julia found her husband on the door-step. "I have brought your trunk," he said. "How is she? Is it very bad?"

"Doctor Bramwell says she has had a narrow escape of brain fever; but she had a long sleep and there is no fear now. She will be about in a few days, but I should like to stay with her as long as I can be of use. I suppose you don't mind?"

"I mind very much, my wife; but you shall stay if you are willing," said Harold, and then, to her infinite surprise, he put his two hands on her shoulders and kissed her.

Anne did not hear of her sister's illness till the next morning; she then lost no time in coming to her, and was much hurt and surprised to find she had not been sent for at once.

"You have none of you been very kind to her of late, from what I can make out," said Julia with her old

candor; "and I dare say she didn't care to send for you; but she has been looked after."

"We are much obliged to you for what you have done," said Anne with dignity, "but I like to nurse my own sister myself, thank you."

To do Aune justice she repented of this speech afterwards, and when she had heard all Pamela had to tell her of Julia, she went away into the next room to seek her, and, taking both the girl's hands in her own, begged her pardon for her harshness with a humility which was particularly striking in so comely and matronly a person. "And you were quite right," she added, "in saying we had been hard with Pamela all the time she was wanting to set herself right, poor child, and we were driving her away from it with our stupid severity."

The meeting between the two sisters had been a very happy one. Anne had poured forth all her confession of love and tenderness, and then Pamela had told her what had happened.

"I think I may let you see this," she said, drawing a letter from under her pillow. "It will show you how good he is, and how little he has deserved all this."

There were a few lines written in George's hand, evidently in haste and agitation:

"I have been much more to blame than you, for I always knew that you could not love me best, and I should not have urged you to accept a false position for my sake. I must take my punishment now it has come. If you are happy, I cannot be altogether miserable; so try and be comforted, Pamela, and that will most comfort me. G. L."

Then Anne folded her penitent sister in her arms, and soothed and consoled her as if she had been a child. The soft summer air seemed to tell of peace and reconciliation as it blew in at the window; best of all, little Nancy, who had been playing with Mrs. Burnet, broke loose from the old lady's now feeble supervision and came climbing up-stairs. She rushed to her aunt's bedside, and scrambled up beside her like a kitten.

"Auntie dear, why are you kying so? Did they give you nasty jam?" she asked, with sudden recollection of her own small illnesses and of powders administered under that seductive disguise.

"No, Nancy. It isn't the powders; but don't you cry when you've been naughty?"

"Iss. But you're not naughty, you're gown up."

"Ah, I wish I weren't grown up," she sighed; "I wish I were a little body like you, and had only done little naughtinesses that didn't hurt anybody much! You wouldn't love me any more if I were naughty, would you, Nancy?"

Nancy had just filled her little red mouth with a large strawberry, and was deprived of power of speech for the moment; but she nodded her head gravely, and when the strawberry was gone, she said with unusual distinctness, "Yes, I suld, of course."

That was the truest bit of comfort Pamela found in her troubles.

CHAPTER XXX.

"Hope, memory, love:
Hope for fair morn, and love for day,
And memory for the evening gray
And solitary dove."

IT was soon known in Merehampstead that Mr. Lynton's foolish engagement was broken off. Naturally, the common opinion was that Pamela had been jilted, and that such a punishment was no more than her outrageous presumption had deserved. George had gone away to join some friends at Beckermouth, and only came over occasionally to see his mother; and Pamela, after she recovered from her illness, went out very little, so there was an aggravating scarcity of material to build theories upon, and the good Merehampstead folks were driven to lay hold of the first and likeliest that came to hand, and to stick to it in spite of contradictory rumors from Stourton itself.

Pamela's illness was not a long one: in a few days, as Julia had prophesied, she was up and going about as usual; and much against her will, her kind nurse had to leave her and return to the cold hospitality of the Little Farm. But her recovery did not altogether satisfy those who were watching her, and hoping day by day to see the old cheerfulness and brightness of health come back to her.

Even Emilia, who returned at this time to Rose Hall, noticed the change in her sister. "She has got to be so quiet," she said to Anne. "Nothing seems to make

her angry, and nothing seems to make her pleased. John says she is sorry for having been so foolish as to let George Lynton slip through her fingers, and that makes her dull; but I don't think it can be that, for it was all her own doing, as everybody knows. John spoke to her about it the other day, and told her what a silly girl she had been, and how it had vexed Aunt Carry and all of us. She did get a little angry then, I think; you know Pamela will never be spoken to. Well, she turned quite white, and walked to the door, and then at the last moment she turned round and said, 'I forbid you ever to speak to me on this subject again,' just as if she had been the Queen and Parliament all in one and off she marched out of the room. John was quite huffed about it, I can tell you; but, dear me, it wasn't a bit like one of her old passions!"

"It was a good test of her temper certainly," remarked Anne, dryly. "But John had better not carry his experiments too far. Everybody hasn't got patient all of a sudden, if Pamela has."

"You are always making nasty remarks about John, Anne," whimpered Emilia. "I am sure I don't keep saying such unkind things about Joe. John mayn't be so smooth-spoken as some other folks; but then, think what a lot he has got on his mind, with the Manchester business still going on, and his property, and everything. I don't think it is sisterly of you to talk like that."

"I'm very sorry, Milly dear. I do forget like that he is your husband now and then; but can't you make him leave Pamela alone? She has had worries enough without him, goodness knows!"

"As if it would make any difference what I said!" answered Emilia, with a certain pride in her own incapacity. "My husband isn't one to listen to a woman, I can tell you, be she who she may."

"Well, I must get her and grandmother over here a bit," said Anne, hopefully. "We'll see if we can cheer her up a little, won't we, Nancy dear? And the fresh

air will put a scrap of color into her cheeks perhaps. I don't know myself how folks manage to live cooped up in a street, with a yard at the back where you couldn't swing a cat, like Pamela has. And she brought up so differently too!"

This invitation was given soon after, and very thankfully accepted. Pamela was glad to escape into the country, and to the old gray house where so many of her happiest days had been passed, and which, next to Rose Hall, she loved best of any place in the world. Her grandmother, too, seemed less fretful and exacting in the bright, cheerful atmosphere of Anne's home. The scrupulous neatness of the house pleased her sense of order, and reflected some credit on herself; for she often reminded Anne of the pains that had been bestowed upon her bringing-up, and bade her be thankful that she had been taught thrifty, housewifely ways when she was young. "Not but what you are a credit to your teaching, Anne, and that I will allow, and it's more than could be said for either of your sisters; for anything more shiftless than Emilia's ways I never did see, with all the table and breakfast cloths mixed up in the linen press, and the big sheets folded in with the little ones, and the eggs all jumbled about so that you can't tell one laying from another. As for Pamela, she has always got a book in her hand since she was ill; that seems to be all she is fit for."

Another reason why Pamela was glad to go to Rose Hall was, that it was nearer to the Little Farm and gave her more frequent opportunities of seeing Julia. It was no morbid sentiment which attracted her to Harold's wife. To her old childish generosity and warm-heartedness Julia had added stronger and deeper qualities, which ought to have preserved her from the fate that had fallen to her had not circumstances been very hard upon her. As things were, her love for her husband seemed turning to mere bitterness; her self-respect had been wounded almost to death, and Pamela was sometimes driven to

think that no fate that Harold had saved her from could have been much worse than what he was bringing her to ignorantly.

During the time they were together she had been very frank about her past troubles, and Pamela had learned the whole of her history up to the time of her marriage.

"It was such a happy time we had in London before the ruin came," she told her friend, as they sat together in the dusk one evening when Pamela was getting better. "We had such a beautiful house. I've been to Stourton once, but I don't think, so far as I can recollect, that the carpets and furniture there were fit to compare with what we had. I never had the full enjoyment of it, you know, because I was shut up almost all day with my governess. You can't think how I used to count the days till I should be seventeen. I was to be set free then, and I used to think it would be all riding about on my beautiful horse, and paying visits, and enjoying myself. And then the dreadful time came. Oh, Pamela! can you imagine how horrible it must be to see everything belonging to you sold? The very bed you used to lie upon, the glass you have seen your own face in a thousand times, down to my mother's gold bracelets and fur mantle,—everything went in a single day. Of our clothes they only let us keep the shabby ones. There was an old blue stuff gown I had put aside to give to a buy-a-broom girl that used to pass the house; well I had to put that on to go away in. Poor father got so angry because I cried and wanted to take something better out of the press where all my pretty things were put away. He said they didn't belong to us, and I was no better than a thief: but how could one think of one's dresses that had all been cut to fit belonging to any one else? Then poor father died, away in a miserable lodging we went to out at Lambeth. You know the wicked stories they told about *him after he* was dead," she continued, flushing with

wrath. "They wouldn't leave him alone even then; and he couldn't bear any one to speak ill of him; but he was past knowing by that time, and so I suppose it didn't matter.

"Well then, you know, we got poorer and poorer, mother and I; and at last I had to do something. They all say now I might have found 'decent work,' such as plain sewing or teaching; but good heavens, Pamela! how much do you think I could have earned at plain work, when I could never sew a seam straight in my life? And fancy me teaching! Why I can't spell nicely enough even to please my own husband to this very day! Besides, I don't deny it, I had often been to the theatre, and I'd thought sometimes it must be nice enough to be dressed up in those pretty, gay dresses and go dancing about to the music with all the people clapping their hands. It is pretty to look at, isn't it? but oh, it is very different when you are in the midst of it all! Why, I have cried over every yard of muslin in my skirts, for the money for it came out of my poor mother's daily bread! It is all very well dancing when you are light of heart, but when you are sad and perhaps hungry too, it comes to be very different. It was a horrible time; I wish I could forget it. I was dancing away, Pamela, the very night my mother died. I came home and found her struggling for breath; a widow woman who lodged in the house came up and kept with me or else I should have been all alone with her. Perhaps you think I ought to have given up the theatre after that. Well, I don't know; I had to get my living and I didn't know any other way."

"Tell me the rest," said Pamela, taking her hand.

"There is not much more to tell. Soon after that I met Harold. It was going past a shop one rainy night. I suppose the light shone on my face, and he stopped and looked at me. I think I should have run on, for *I didn't* want him to know all about me, but he looked *so mis*erable himself; so I waited and shook hands.

He made me tell him all my history; but he told me nothing of his. Then he made me leave the theatre, and he took me away from my old lodgings because, he said, it wasn't a fit place for a young woman alone, and I was glad enough to be a little looked after; and so things went on, till one day he came and asked me to marry him. That was such a happy day—almost the last happy day of my life. Oh, Pamela," she burst forth with a sudden surge of passion; "had he any right to treat me so? He never said one word of the reason. He asked me just as if he loved me and wanted me for my own sake. He never said one word of all the bad things people had said of us—as if I should have cared! How was I to know he didn't love me, and only did it because he thought he had brought me a bad name, and wanted to set me right? 'Right,' indeed! I don't know what was wrong if that was right."

"Dear Julia! it will come right even yet, I am sure it will, if only you have patience and go on loving your husband. When once you are alone and away from here all will be well. Why don't you persuade him to take you away?"

"He is going away to the West Indies, he says, on this new business he has got; but he doesn't want the pleasure of my company. I will stop behind if he likes, but not at his mother's house I vow," she answered, with flashing eyes. "I won't live to be patronized by Mrs. Turrell, and tolerated by Mrs. Campeny, like an unhappy foundling they are forced to dole out a living to. I'll go back to my old life sooner, and be free of them all."

Pamela was silent, and Julia could not help thinking her friend a little cold; but in reality she was almost too deeply pained to speak, and she knew how impossible it was that she, of all people, should be mediator between Harold Turrell and his wife.

Soon after this she went to the Abbey, and while *there she saw* Julia very frequently, and Harold, also,

on one or two occasions. As time went on it really seemed that her prophecy was coming true, and she felt sure that things were improving at the Little Farm. Julia lost her hard, defiant look, Harold became more kind to her, and even Mrs. Turrell appeared to be pleased with the improvement in her daughter-in-law. Pamela set this happy change down to Mrs. Campeny's management; but, in fact, her own friendship for the poor neglected girl had done more than anything else to bring it about, and had, in her husband's eyes at least, cast a new halo around Julia.

No more was said about Harold's journey to the West Indies till he surprised every one by coming up to the Abbey, one August morning, to announce his immediate departure and say good-bye.

"When do you leave here?" said Pamela, as he came over to shake hands with her the last thing. They were in the old hall, and Pamela was standing rather apart from the others, under one of the great, arched windows, holding a bunch of freshly-gathered roses in her hand.

"I shall start for London to-morrow morning, but I don't suppose I shall sail for another three weeks at any rate; there is a good deal to do first."

"Shall I see Julia before she goes? I should like to, if she is not too busy."

"Julia would not thank me to take her on such a journey. I shall not be more than six or eight months away, and she will be happier at home." He held out his hand as if he wished to avoid any further discussion. Pamela set down her roses in a sweet, dewy heap on the stone window-sill; she flushed all over her face and neck, and when she spoke it was in reluctant, hesitating accents, as if the words came against her will.

"I am sure she would like to go—would be happier with you—and better. Good-bye. I wish you a safe journey," she added, with a sudden recoil from earnestness to coldness, and she went swiftly away, having just

touched his hand with the tips of her fingers, on which the dew and scent of the roses still lingered.

Once in her own room she burst into tears. What right had she, of all people, to talk to Harold about his wife? What would he think of her? And then she felt sure it would be useless.

The next day Harold left Merehampstead; he was alone, but he had made arrangements for his wife to follow him in a few days. She and Pamela met once more in the meantime. Julia was radiant with joy and hope.

"He was so kind about it," she said, with tears in her eyes, "and I really believe now he only wanted to leave me at home for my own sake, because he thought I should not like the sea. As if I would not go anywhere to be with him! There is no one like him, I think, so good and kind and clever. I shall have him all to myself, away from his mother and every one (though I'm sorry for her too, poor soul), and I'll try and make up to him for all he has done for me. Ah, Pamela, what a dear prophet you were! It was you who gave me a little hope to begin with, wasn't it? And I shall never forget how good you have been to me—never, never."

But she never knew quite all that she owed to her friend.

CHAPTER XXXI.

"That even the weariest river
Winds somewhere safe to sea."

AFTER Harold and his wife had left Merehampstead, there came at the close of the wet, stormy summer, a month of almost unbroken fine weather. Pamela went strolling about the garden, and down to her old haunts by the river, sometimes with little Nancy, sometimes alone; often carrying a book in her hand, but reading little, for her thoughts seemed frequently to wander away into some quiet region, half sad, half happy, but altogether patient and restful. Her friends wished to see her more actively employed, and Anne often suggested various occupations which she might turn to with advantage.

"With your money and leisure, Pamela, you might do no end of good in the world, instead of going mooning about all day long as you do."

"I am going to be very busy when I get back to Mere," she would answer, smilingly. "But this is my holiday, and I don't mean to be cheated out of it for any one."

"I wish, at all events, you wouldn't be for ever reading Sunday books," said Emilia. "It makes one feel quite uncomfortable. You don't feel ill, do you?"

"No, Milly, not at all; but I feel like Sundays sometimes on week-days. It is so quiet here, and nothing to do. You can manage to put up with that amount of peculiarity in an unmarried woman, can't you? I

have no John, you see, to define Mondays from Sundays so clearly."

One balmy morning, when the trees were beginning to take their first tinge of yellow under the cloudless sky, she went down towards the old boat-house, with the half-hope of finding Molly Jones, who, as Totty's eldest sister, had been appointed as little Nancy's nurse, wandering about there with her charge. But she found the boat-house empty and silent, except for the quiet ripple of the water. She made herself comfortable in the bow of one of the boats, and drew her book from her pocket. It was a little old-fashioned volume of George Herbert, that had belonged to her mother, and still bore her faded marks on its pages, which were getting yellow and mildew-spotted now. The blue river ran past briskly and merrily, leaving in its sweep a little space of quiet water in front of the boat-house. Now and then a scarlet leaf from the creeper round the archway fluttered down to this calm surface, to float on slowly till the current caught and hurried it away. It was the first brilliant touch of autumn that was glowing upon the trees, and gleaming in a few bright, new-fallen leaves from the grass: the time when the fullness of summer melts into something still more gorgeous and complete, and which bears as yet no promise of decay—no threat of the forlorn, chill days to come. In the midst of this color and brightness, Pamela sat reading a quiet little poem called "Evensong:"

"Yet still thou goest on
And now with darknesse closest wearie eyes,
Saying to men, 'It doth suffice—
Henceforth repose, your work is done.'

"Thus in thy ebony box
Thou dost inclose us, till the day
Put new amendment in our way,
And give new wheels to our disordered clocks."

As she read, the quiet night sky seemed to close

over her head, and the stars to look down upon her; the "ebony box" to take her into its darkness and refreshing calm. This was what she needed—rest, and then an awakening to another and higher life. Not to forget—that could not be; but to learn to look upon her past as on the events of yesterday, and in the light of a new and greater to-day. Whether it were her fault or her misfortune, life had gone wrong with her, she had made shipwreck of hope and joy; but not of faith, and her yearnings were above and beyond all these things.

Suddenly she heard a sound which made her let fall her book and start to her feet. It was a scream, long, sharp, and breathless; and then came a rush of feet through the little fir plantation to her left hand. She sprang from the boat, and ran to meet the new-comer. It was Molly, with her bonnet hanging round her neck, flying at full speed towards the house.

"Oh, Miss Pamela!" she cried, seizing her arm, "run to the house. I can't. She has fallen into the water—Nancy has! I've no breath left."

"Come back, come back!" exclaimed Pamela. "Show me where. There is no time to go to the house; come with me, Molly."

They hastened into the boat-house; the spot where the child had fallen in was higher up, but Pamela remembered the current and that it was better to start low down the river and make her way up. There were two boats in the boat-house: the one she had been sitting in was that which was always used, and would have been safe and manageable enough, but alas! it was chained and padlocked to its iron ring; the other, however, had been considered too old and worthless to need such a precaution, and was only fastened by a bit of rope. As Pamela sprang into it the water came gurgling in through half-a-dozen cracks and rifts, and it was as much as she could do to keep her balance while she loosed the knot that held it. She snatched

a coil of rope from the other boat, and passing one end of it through the ring, she knotted it into a firm loop and put it into Molly's hand; the other end she fastened to the bow of the boat she was in. "Now Molly," she cried, seizing an oar and steadying herself in her standing position, "I will push out, and you let out the rope as I go; when I hold up my hand begin to pull me in. I think you will be able if I can keep off the other side where the water runs so. Pull the moment I shout or hold up my hand, mind."

"Oh, don't go, don't go!" implored Molly. "The boat is sinking this blessed moment. It'll be two lost instead of one." But Pamela had already pushed her crazy craft out beyond the arch of the boat-house. It was so unsteady she could hardly keep her footing, but at that moment a little white object rose to the surface of the water, and she must have seen it and taken heart. Another vigorous push, and the oar slipped from her hands, but she had leaned over and seized the child's clothes. This was all she could do; Nancy's drenched garments seemed to drag her under the boat, and, from her insecure footing, Pamela could venture upon no sudden effort, but holding the child still in the water with one hand she raised the other as a signal to Molly. Hope dawned on Molly's mind for the first time as she began to pull, but it was but short-lived. The boat had floated out quite into the current by this time, and her struggles with the rope had only the effect of making it grow more and more tense until it became quite evident that it could not bear such a strain much longer. Just then she saw Pamela stoop down still lower to the water. She took a shorter length of rope from the boat and seemed to attach it to the child's clothes. Then she looked up again and cried, "Now, Molly!"

Molly nearly fell backwards as the rope suddenly yielded to her efforts. "I don't know how I righted myself," she said afterwards; "but I think it was the sight of her in the boat. It shot down the stream like an ar-

row once she loosed the rope. She was standing, though I don't know how she kept her feet with the boat rocking like that and nigh upon ready to sink: but she stood quite upright, with her two hands clasped and such a look on her face. I think she knew the child was saved; but the boat was swept out of sight in a moment. Then I took little Nancy in my arms—like a dead thing she was—and ran home. No; I met nobody, though I screamed for help all the way as I went, till close against the house there was a gentleman on horseback and I told him. I didn't see it was Mr. George at the time. He rode off like a madman, and I took the child in to her mother."

It was long before they dared to tell Anne at what a price the life of her child had been saved. Not till the little thing had been restored to consciousness, then soothed and comforted, and had finally fallen into a sound sleep, did any one hint, or Anne inquire about the other circumstances of the accident. Then Joe broke the news to her as gently as he could.

It was late in the afternoon when a bare-headed, pallid-cheeked woman went flying down towards the boat-house. The little throng that had gathered about the door, parted in respectful silence to let her pass, and she went in.

There was the same quiet ripple which Pamela had always loved, the same softened light reflected up from the water, the same flitting lights overhead. In the very heart of this calm she lay enshrined; her long brown hair swept back over the pillow, her eyes almost closed, and a smile hovering about her lips. The leaves of the book she had been reading, and which still lay on the floor, fluttered in the soft air. "It doth suffice. Henceforth repose—"

This benison was hers now. In this quiet place where she had so often, as she once said "longed to come *away* and rest," she had at last found to the full her *heart's* desire.

Towards evening time they had carried her up to the Abbey; but before that, one other tribute was paid to the majesty which Death had thrown around her.

Mrs. Lynton had heard certain vague reports of an accident in the river in which her son's name was mingled. He had only arrived from Beckermouth that morning, and she felt almost sure that he had ridden in the direction of the Abbey. At last her anxiety grew ungovernable, and she determined to go and inquire for him. She had been gradually led to the scene of the disaster by various and contradictory scraps of information, and she was little prepared for what met her eyes when she entered the boat-house. Anne and George were the only watchers there; neither of them took any notice of her approach; indeed, Anne never lifted her head and probably did not see her. She went and stood by her son with her hand on his arm. At last, moved by an irresistible impulse, she bent down and kissed the cold forehead of the woman she had so long looked upon as her greatest enemy, and burst into a flood of tears. George's arms were round her in a moment.

"Persuade him to go home," said Anne, looking up at last and taking her hand. "He has been so long in those wet clothes, and no one can do anything now."

So life and the little demands of to-day came creeping back upon those she had loved best. They who would willingly have borne her company into the still land whither she had gone, had no choice but to hurry on in the ways that were appointed for them, leaving to her the stillness, the victory over sorrow outlived, the triumph of rest that is attained.

POSTSCRIPT.

"Had I my will, beloved, I would say
To God, unto whose bidding all things bow,
That we were still together night and day:
Yet be it done as His behests allow.
I do remember that while she remained
With me, she often called me her sweet friend,
But does not now,
Because God drew her towards Him in the end
Lady, that peace which none but He can send
Be thine. Ever so."

THERE is not much more to tell about Pamela's sisters. Anne outlived, though she never forgot, her trouble. In course of time she became the mother of a family of stalwart sons, but Nancy remained her only daughter and the apple of her father's eye. In after years, when she was grown a slim, thoughtful girl, she would lead her little brothers down to the old boat-house, which had become sacred ground now; and while they stood round, bareheaded and awe-struck, she would tell them how their brave and beautiful aunt had here given up her life to save Nancy's own. It was a story they never wearied of hearing, and Pamela's name came to be regarded among them as that of a household saint.

Emilia and her husband grew more and more prosperous as years went on. Everything John took in hand seemed to turn to money, and he became, as the *local* newspapers put it, "An honor and an ornament *to the* neighborhood." In course of time he became *master* of Stourton Hall, and his wife reigned in the

stately old house where Pamela had once had a chance of being mistress. There was, however, one bitter drop in Emilia's cup: Anne never would yield proper deference to her younger, but wealthier sister, and to the end of the chapter reserved to herself the right of making disparaging remarks about Emilia's husband, and what was worse, about her housekeeping and the bad manners of her children. This disagreeable frankness led in time to a painful coolness between the families.

George Lynton succeeded his grandfather in his title and estates. His reign was a short but beneficent one. He died before he had quite reached middle age, still unmarried. His heir was a distant relation whom George had never seen, and as he had property of his own in a neighboring county which he did not care to leave, the old Hall was let, and Mr. John Burnet became its first tenant.

The poor folks in the neighborhood used to talk among themselves about the good old times when the "real gentry" lived up at Stourton; and many of them cherished loving memories of the last lord, and would point with pride to the school and almshouses he had built, and the marshes he had drained, and would pray for such another friend with many shakes of the head at the mere name of John Burnet. As John, however, took particular pains to discover what doles of soup, coals, and blankets had been distributed by his predecessors, and to perpetuate these charities, a good deal of this may be put down to the well-known unthankfulness of the poor.

Mrs. Long, in spite of her ill-health, lived to a good old age. She always continued to be remarkable for the Christian fortitude with which she bore her sufferings, and for her gentle and amiable manners.

Harold Turrell never returned to Merehampstead, nor did he ever write any more music. His business turned out *moderately* successful, and enabled him to provide *decently for* his wife and family. Sometimes when his

children grew old enough he would improvise little airs and ballads for them, but he would never even listen to his wife's suggestions that he should write down these compositions. He was fond of playing to himself, too, in those days; and Julia one evening, gliding into the room at twilight when he had been so employed, found him bowed down before the instrument, his head buried in his hands, and his whole form shaken by sobs. There were some chambers in her husband's heart which she knew were not for her to look into—some troubles which she dared not seek to share with him; so she slid away, making no sign, to bear his sorrow and her own in secret.

He and George Lynton met once before the death of the latter, and there was reconciliation, if not full explanation, between them. That either of them quite understood the coil of misunderstanding and misrepresentation which had made such havoc of their own lives, and of that other life much dearer to them than their own, is scarcely likely. But explanation is not always the best soother of difficulties even in this hard-headed world; and if they learned to believe in one another before everything was made quite plain to them, perhaps it was so much the better, and they had approached so much nearer to Pamela's loving trustfulness—to her sweet and gentle faith, which made life seem holier and purer to them both, even when they had only the memory of her to guide them on to the end.

THE END.

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